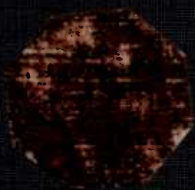


A GLANCE  
INTO THE PAST



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**A GLANCE INTO THE PAST**



# A GLANCE INTO THE PAST

BY  
ARTHUR SEBRIGHT

LONDON  
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**A GLANCE INTO THE PAST**





# A Glance into the Past

## CHAPTER I

My Boyhood. Death of my Father and Mother. Sir Hastings Yelverton. Miss Octavia Sebright. My School-days. My Brother Jack's Marriage. Montagu Loftus's Originality.

**I**N writing my reminiscences I am doing what I have been repeatedly requested to do during the last twenty years. I have, however, postponed from time to time beginning the work, partly from sheer idleness, and partly because I have always felt that I should be faced with the difficulty of so compiling the following pages that they might interest those who care to read them, and at the same time avoid hurting the feelings of people who are still living. Shakespeare has most truly said that "All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players," and

for me the curtain rang up on the 30th of March, 1859, at a house in Wilton Place that my father had taken for the season.

My father, Sir Thomas Sebright, of Beechwood Park, Herts, and Besford Court, Worcester, married twice, his first wife being a Miss Hoffman, daughter of Captain Hoffman. By her he had two sons, Walter and John; the former died before he reached the age of manhood; the latter lived to succeed to the title and estates as Sir John Sebright, afterwards referred to in these pages.

My father married as his second wife a Miss Henry, daughter of Colonel Henry and Lady Emily Henry, who was before her marriage Lady Emily Fitzgerald, daughter of the Duke of Leinster. By this marriage my father had three sons, Edgar, Guy and myself, Edgar, my eldest brother, being the late Sir Edgar Sebright, who was for some time Equerry to Her Royal Highness Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck. My brother Guy was formerly in the Coldstream Guards and is now Sir Guy Sebright.

The early childhood of my brothers and myself was spent at Beechwood Park, Hertfordshire, which has been for generations and still is the family home of the Sebrights. Beechwood is a very

beautiful place, for which we all feel strong affection. When I was six weeks old my mother died, so that practically I never had a mother. When I was only seven years old my father also died and I was left an orphan.

At my father's death an aunt of mine, Miss Octavia Sebright, became our guardian, in conjunction with our uncle, Admiral Sir Hastings Yelverton, but the latter being in Command of the Mediterranean Fleet, our aunt being in reality our sole guardian, took upon her shoulders the entire care of my brothers and myself, and continued this care until her death some seven years later. Certainly no woman ever showed a more noble and unselfish devotion to her nephews or a higher sense of duty than did this best of women. After my father's death we continued to live for some time at Beechwood, but the estates having passed at his death to my half brother, Jack, we eventually moved to London, my aunt having taken a lease of No. 34 Elvaston Place, Queen's Gate, which became our abode.

Before proceeding with the events of my own life let me here say a few words concerning this particular locality in which we had come to settle. It may surprise many of the young people of to-

day to hear that in those days when my nursery governess used to take me for a walk down Elvaston Place into Gloucester Road, we used to cross that street and shortly afterwards get over a stile that led into a turnip field. A short distance from this in that part which is now occupied, I think, by Kensington Court, stood the premises of Messrs. Blackman, the horse dealers, who owned an open-air riding school, together with a large field in which were a number of fences used for the schooling of hunters, and known as Blackman's Hunting Grounds. At this establishment we boys first began to ride. The Albert Memorial was of course not yet built, and the present site of the Imperial Institute, the Natural History Museum, and the Albert Hall, was occupied by the Royal Horticultural Gardens.

At the unusually early age of nine it was decided to send me to Eton, and to Eton accordingly I went, entering the house of Mr. John Hawtrey, affectionately known to thousands in this country as "Jack Hawtrey," and father of Charles Hawtrey, the well-known actor. I believe I am accurate in saying that I was the youngest boy who ever went to Eton. After I had been there about two years Mr. Hawtrey gave up his position as an



Eton Master and opened a first-class Preparatory School at Aldin House, Slough. I went with him, being, to the best of my recollection, the first boy who entered the doors of that famous establishment, the intention being that I should return to Eton at the age of fourteen.

My particular friends at Eton were Hugh Lowther (now Lord Lonsdale), Lord Trafalgar, and Mr. Carter Wood. The latter had some remarkably pretty sisters, two of whom married two brothers, both of them great friends of mine, namely, Freddy Knollys and his brother Sip Knollys of the Scots Guards, who, poor fellow, died some years ago in consequence of an accident.

Only four events have imprinted themselves on my memory in connection with my stay at Eton. The first was the famous fight between Tindal and Wake. The second was a fight between Hugh Lowther and a boy called Bury, due to the former's interference because he thought I was being bullied. The third event was this. Hugh Lowther was talking to me one day out of a bedroom window while I was standing in the playing field below. I began to pelt him with rotten apples, while he amused himself by dodging them as he bobbed his head up and down. After three or four

shots, none of which hit the target, I made a solemn vow that the next shot should be a bull's eye, but I was not aware that Mr. Hawtrey had in the meantime entered the dormitory and severely admonished Hugh Lowther; so the next head that popped up at the window was not Hugh Lowther's but the Rev. John's, and this time sure enough it was a bull's eye, for my rotten apple landed full on that much respected nose and burst like a high explosive shell all over his face. Only those who knew dear old Jack Hawtrey and who remember the respectful awe with which we boys regarded that gentleman will realise the horror of my feelings at the moment. He, however, treated the mishap like the gentleman and sportsman he was. The remaining event that impressed itself on my memory and that may be said to have imprinted itself on me elsewhere, was the flogging of me by Dr. Durnford, whom Etonians will remember as Judy Durnford, for forcibly kissing the housemaid. As I was only ten years of age I considered the punishment rather superfluous.

I must now return to Aldin House, Slough, where, as I have already remarked, I arrived on the opening day. I do not suppose that there ever was or ever will be a school where the boys were so well

cared for, so well fed, or received in every respect so much individual attention as they did at Aldin House. No school ever possessed a better tone, or took more pains to bring up the boys to be gentlemen in every sense of the word. About two years after my arrival at Hawtrey's, being a far more promising boy at games than at lessons, I got my Cricket Eleven Cap and became chief bowler. I never was a really good bat but was best known in that particular department of the game for very hard hitting. Among those who played with me in the Eleven at that time were that famous cricketer Lord Hawke, the Hon. Dan Finch, Billie Brownlow (the present Lord Lurgan), and Mr. Arthur Newton.

I spent at Hawtrey's a thoroughly happy and healthy life, both in mind and body, and when I reached the age of fourteen it was decided, I do not exactly know why, to send me to Radley instead of back to Eton, so to Radley I went. Radley College was originally the family place of Sir George Bowyer, and the house and park were sold by the Bowyer family to the College authorities. It is situated only a few miles from Oxford. The natural surroundings of Radley are everything that could be wished for to make it a great school. It

always did, and I believe still does, turn out some very good oarsmen, and the Radley Eight is always a prominent feature at Henley Regatta. It also turned out an excellent Cricket Eleven, of which I became a member. There is also, or anyhow was, a very good cricket team of Old Radleians, called "The Radley Rangers," for whom I used to play after I left school.

In spite of all this, all was not right with Radley. The principal cause of trouble was the Warden of that time, who was stern but unjust, morose without dignity, utterly tactless and unsympathetic, without any idea of how to gain the confidence either of the boys or of the Under Masters. There were also at that time certainly two other masters who were exact copies of himself. There was, however, one master in particular who will always stand out as a real good fellow and who was loved by the whole school, namely, dear old Charlie Moore, and I shall always look back upon him with affection, and with him I must include Kitty Warton, the organist, who is I believe there to this day. There are also at Radley far too many chapel attendances, in fact on Saints' Days we boys were hardly ever out of chapel, so that we gradually came to regard the worship of God as a particularly tedious sort of



drill. This I am certain is a most hurtful and injurious system, resulting in the manufacture of a number of merely "professing" Christians and humbugs.

The chapel at Radley is fine, contains a most excellent organ with a particularly sweet vox humana stop, and came I believe originally from Cologne Cathedral, or at least so I have been told. My great friend and inseparable companion at Radley was Howard Vyse. We were practically always together and our great friendship lasted till his death some years later when he was leading his men into action—a dearer better fellow never breathed. His sister married her cousin, Mr. Howard Vyse, of "The Blues," whom also I knew very well, and whose name is mentioned by me in these pages in connection with a rather amusing experience of mine.

While I was at Radley I suffered one of the most painful personal bereavements of my life, namely, the loss of my aunt and guardian, Miss Sebright. Well do I remember the arrival of the telegram recalling me to London. She died at Elvaston Place and was buried in the family vault at Flampstead Church in Hertfordshire. I was so young when I lost my parents that I have no recollection

whatever of my mother and only a very faint recollection of my father. Consequently the two sacred words mother and father had for me no meaning whatever. I forgot to mention that not long after the death of my father and our removal with my aunt from Beechwood to Elvaston Place, my brother Jack married the Hon. Olivia Fitzpatrick, the youngest daughter of Lord Castletown, an extremely clever and fascinating though rather eccentric woman, afterwards well known in London Society as Lady Sebright.

During our residence at Elvaston Place I used often to see Montagu Loftus, the youngest son of Lord Loftus, at that time British Ambassador in St. Petersburg. He lived quite close to us in Queen's Gate. He might be best described as "original," and his originality was perhaps most strangely exhibited in his peculiar manner of dealing with his personal luggage. I remember one day he had just arrived from abroad and I was sitting with him in his bedroom; when he had finished unpacking three large leather portmanteaux I found that he had a most effectual method of saving both time and labour, for he simply threw them out of the window, whence by good luck they fell as they were intended into the area.

I remember one foggy winter's night I was sitting with him and he was showing me an enormous Russian or Turkish sabre. I remarked that I should not like anybody to attack me with it. "No," he replied, "nor would anybody else. Just notice." He seized the weapon, ruffled his hair all up on end, and then opened the street door. There was in the street only one person, a man carrying a box on his head and walking toward us in the mist. Monty Loftus charged at him brandishing the sabre over his head, at the same time giving vent to a series of the most diabolical shrieks. The man stood for a moment as if petrified, then believing no doubt that he was in the presence of a homicidal maniac, he dropped the box off his head with a crash, fled at full speed and vanished in the mist.

## CHAPTER II

I leave Radley and go to a Tutor's. Hunting in a London Hotel. My first deal in horses. Tom Dickinson. I am launched in London.

**W**HEN I left Radley, the house in Elvaston Place having been sold, my two brothers and myself took up our abode at the South Kensington Hotel in Queen's Gate Place. About this time my brother Guy entered the Army and left to join his Regiment, and as it had been decided that I was to go into the Guards I was sent to the Rev. Mr. Hutchinson, Pitstone Vicarage, near Tring, who was to act as my Army crammer. I must here give some account of Mr. Hutchinson, who was to have the doubtful pleasure of instructing and ruling over myself and three or four other particularly unruly young gentlemen, varying in age from seventeen to twenty. Mr. Hutchinson was in appearance rather



short, with a round, beaming and kindly face, and a nature that was far too pliant and far too confiding for his job. I am sorry to say that we all took more or less advantage of him. My fellow workers—or rather non-workers—at Pitstone were Lord Henry Paulet (the present Marquess of Winchester), Mr. Napier, Mr. George Marsh, and Tom Dickinson, and I have no hesitation in saying that we contrived to combine the maximum of sport with the minimum of work. My life at this period consisted of hunting, shooting, ratting, dances, and in the winter Hunt balls, and excursions from time to time to London with a little spasmodic work occasionally for the sake of appearances. In addition to this I also kept a pack of dwarf harriers and a couple of horses in the neighbouring village in order to assist my military studies.

I must at this point give my readers a short account of my hounds and of their arrival at Pitstone Vicarage. I had been for some time before I left Radley quietly collecting them, although I was not quite clear in my mind at that time where and when I should ever be able to use them. However, when it was decided that I should go to Pitstone I telegraphed from the South Kensington

Hotel, where I was living, and ordered them to be sent up to me the day before my departure for that peaceful spot. They arrived safely at Paddington Station, but by a much later train than I had intended, and were met by myself. They were as wild as hawks, and from their general demeanour I had grave misgivings about their respectability and future conduct. It was not long before I realised that my misgivings were well-founded. Strangely enough it had never occurred to me that I had no place in London for a pack of hounds, especially at that hour of the night; however, even at that age, I was not going to be stopped by trifles, so I packed them into three four-wheeled cabs and decided to take them to the South Kensington Hotel, although I was not quite clear in my mind as to what I was going to do with them when I got there. I travelled in the first cab with a portion of the pack, the remainder following behind in the other cabs. We duly arrived at the hotel, the drivers of the other cabs informing me on our arrival that their portions of the pack had fought throughout the whole of the journey. Nothing daunted, however, I threw open the cab doors, and airing all the hound language of which I was possessed, I boldly marched into the hotel at 11.30 p.m. surrounded

by ten couple of hounds. All might even then have gone well but for the unfortunate circumstance that the hotel cat was at that moment sitting in the hall pondering over the various pleasures and disappointments of life. One look was enough for her and up the grand staircase of the hotel she fled like greased lightning with the entire pack in pursuit; the pace was hot and the cat chose as a line all the principal bedroom corridors of the hotel, which was crowded at the time. I have always loved the music of a pack of hounds in full cry, but for some little time after that night I could hardly think of it without a shudder. No words of mine can describe the scene in the corridors of the hotel—furious men and women standing at their bedroom doors in their night attire, all endeavouring to outstrip one another in their abuse of my unfortunate self. One furious and extremely stout old gentleman approached me in a threatening attitude exclaiming “Damn it, sir, this is scandalous, it’s an outrage. I will leave the hotel first thing in the morning,” etc., etc. By this time, however, I was past the worried stage and was in a boiling rage with the hounds, the people in the hotel, and everything else. I yelled at him, “Damn it, sir, you don’t suppose I hunt hotel cats for choice.” By



this time the cat had safely gone to ground somewhere or other and I was informed by a friendly Boots with sporting instincts that the pack had worked their way down into the hall again and were invading the bar, and there sure enough I found them. With the help of my friend the Boots I took them down into the area, and there, having divided them into two lots, we locked them up in two coal holes, where, after we had given them all some water, we left them to do whatever they jolly well liked, which I presume they did, as they howled the greater part of the night, besides indulging in occasional fights to vary the monotony.

The following morning, having possessed myself of a hunting whip, some couples and some leads, I got them under proper control and took them to Pitstone, where we arrived without adventure. On my arrival there I was warmly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson, and casually remarked that my hounds were on the road. "Hounds, my boy," remarked the worthy gentleman; "do you mean to tell me you have brought a pack of hounds?" "Yes, sir," I replied. We eventually agreed that I should hunt them two days a week on the understanding that I did extra work on two other days in order to adjust the balance.



Shortly after this I bought from a sporting farmer in the locality two horses, a bay and a brown. The latter was a good hunter, but the former was not, and I soon afterwards managed to get rid of him in the following manner. I was hacking him one morning into the neighbouring town of Tring, when I saw a sporting doctor whom I knew by sight riding toward me on a particularly good looking and sporting grey horse. I pulled up and got into conversation with him. I saw that he admired my horse very much, and to make a long story short we there and then exchanged, he riding off on my horse and I on his, and I may remark that there never was a shadow of a doubt about who had the best of the bargain. I named this horse Katerfelto and rode him frequently with my own harriers, the Hertfordshire hounds, the Old Berkeley, and with Lord Fitzhardinge in Gloucestershire.

This may be said to be the point at which I began my sporting career. Tom Dickinson, to whom I have already referred as being one of my fellow pupils at Pitstone Vicarage, was quite a character, short in stature, high shouldered, with a bullet head and close-cropped hair. He lived only for ratting with ferrets. His bosom friend and inseparable

companion was a man called Tom Paradine, the village rat-catcher, who must have made quite a good profit by selling him a varied assortment of mongrel curs and ferrets, of which he had abundance. One day when we boys were sitting at tea with Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson, the former looked across the table at me and said, "It is most remarkable, Sebright, how the rats have increased on these premises lately." I agreed that there certainly was quite a fine show, but I could offer no explanation of such a strange phenomenon. I thought at the time that I could see a peculiar expression in Tom Dickinson's eye. Sure enough after tea that young gentleman informed me that three months before he had turned down fifty rats purchased from his dear friend, Tom Paradine, in the stables and outhouses of the reverend gentleman, "just for breeding stock" as he called it. Tom Dickinson was the owner of a wonderful bay mare who could jump almost anything and was as game as a pebble; she was however a very hot ride at the best of times, and although her owner was a very moderate horseman, he could ride this particular animal as no other man could. I borrowed her from him one day and rode her over to Tring Station. Nothing in particular happened till on

the way home, just as we arrived at the cross roads in the village of Stocks. She suddenly made a clean bolt of it; she went straight through the village, past the Lodge gates of Stocks (once the residence of Mrs. Humphrey Ward, but then the residence of Mr. Bright), when, unfortunately, out from a narrow lane on the right hand side of the road there suddenly appeared a travelling pedlar driving a pony and cart. She did not however waste time over trifles, and treating it as if she had been in the habit of jumping ponies and carts all her life, she cleared the lot. Fortunately there was in front of us a very steep hill, up which I started to push her for all she was worth, and by the time she got to the top I succeeded in stopping her. This was the only animal in my life who really took complete charge of me, although many of them have got away with me for a short burst of two hundred yards or so.

While I remained at Pitstone I hunted with my own harriers, Mr. Selby Lowndes' hounds, the Hertfordshire hounds, the Old Berkeley, and once or twice with Baron Rothschild's stag hounds. The last named, however, is a form of sport (if you can call it a sport at all) that does not appeal to me. The whole thing is too tame and too "cut and



dried," and on the rare occasions when I have been out hunting the tame stag I have never quite felt that I was hunting at all. I also did a good deal of shooting at this time, especially with Lord Brownlow at Ashridge.

The time had now come for me to pass my examination for the Army. I accordingly went to London and presented myself at Burlington House for that purpose, but as I had done practically no real work while I was at Pitstone, it was not surprising that I failed in my examination. It was decided, or rather to be correct I decided, for I had now quite kicked over the traces, that all idea of the Army should be dropped, with the result that at the age of nineteen I found myself in the position of a gentleman at large about town looking about five years older than I was, and although still a minor, yet able to borrow money repayable on my coming of age, every shilling of which I repaid immediately after my twenty-first birthday. I may mention that there existed in those days amongst gentlemen a much higher code of honour on those matters than exists to-day, and any young man who repudiated a debt on the grounds that it was incurred by him during his minority, whether for goods supplied or for money borrowed, no



matter whether it came from a moneylender or anyone else, was looked upon as an absolute black-guard and classed on a level with a man who cheated at cards.

Two facts connected with this period of my life were real misfortunes for me ; one was that I looked much older than I really was, and was consequently treated as a man, though I was in reality only a boy and should have been so treated, especially by women. The other was the deplorable fact that I had no sister. One of the greatest regrets of my life is that I never had one, and I should not like to say what sum of money I would not have given to possess a really nice sister whom I could have taken about and petted and spoilt, and who could have been my constant companion, confidant, and friend. Another great advantage that a man derives from having a sister or sisters is the fact that he is better able to weigh women in the balance and to appreciate their real place in the world. I began my career by regarding every woman and girl as a sort of mysterious deity, but later in my life came a time when I honestly and truly believed that such a thing as a good and virtuous woman did not exist.

My brother Guy being now in the Coldstream Guards, my brother Edgar and myself decided to

set up a bachelor establishment in Mount Street, Grosvenor Square, which became our home for some years. From this point in my career I found myself launched into London Society as a man of the world.

### CHAPTER III

The Canterbury Music Hall. Henry Villiers. The Sliding Roof. My Sister-in-law at Lowndes Square. Mrs. Langtry. Mrs. Luke Wheeler. Mrs. Cornwallis West. Lord Ranelagh. The Good-looking men of the day. Boxing and my professional instructors. My Grandfather and the Prize Ring. I enter the City. Hume Webster. Baron Grant. Whittaker Wright. Dr. Strousburgh. Bob Bristowe's shooting party.

**M**Y time in London was spent in very much the same way as that of other young men of my position. In the morning I generally rode in the Row, which was then the universal dress parade of London Society. In the afternoon I paid calls; in the evening there was an endless round of dinners, theatres, the Opera, receptions, and balls, and occasionally a Music Hall. The latter, however, is a form of entertainment that has always rather bored me; there was however in London one Music



Hall to which I used, like many men of my acquaintance, to go very frequently. The Canterbury was in those days run by Mr. Henry Villiers, who afterwards became the lessee of the London Pavilion, and he had managed to get together under its hospitable roof some very charming variety artistes, among whom may be mentioned Nellie Power, Phyllis Broughton (whom I remember as a little girl dancing a hornpipe in sailor's clothes), Ada Wilson, who afterwards married Gordon in "The Blues," and her sister Lizzie Wilson, who married young Cooke, son of Lord Leicester, all of them very charming and attractive girls. There was also a very beautiful Russian girl, whose name I cannot remember.

Talking of the hospitable roof of the Canterbury reminds me of an incident that occurred one night when I was there. Mr. Villiers had recently introduced a new feature into the building, namely, a sliding roof, which enabled the management by some mechanical contrivance or other to cause the roof to slide back, leaving the whole of the centre of the house open to the sky. Of this innovation he was extremely proud, and it had been most extensively advertised all over London. It was a hot



and stifling summer night, and to the comfort and delight of a packed house the roof gracefully slid back without a hitch. I can see Henry Villiers now in my mind, immaculately dressed, with a white waistcoat, a white gardenia in his buttonhole, and his face beaming with pride and self-satisfaction. But unfortunately this roseate condition of things did not last long, for about fifteen minutes later a violent thunderstorm burst over London. The sliding roof positively declined to slide and no power on earth could get it back again, so that torrents of rain poured into the stalls, the occupants of which beat a hasty retreat, with the exception of two or three men who facetiously retained their seats with their umbrellas up. I have often wondered whether Henry Villiers is still in the land of the living; he was a courteous and kindly man and an ideal manager of Variety entertainments.

My brother Jack had now been married for some years, and their town house was at 27 Lowndes Square, their time being spent partly there and partly at Beechwood. My sister-in-law had no claims to beauty, but in spite of that fact she was one of the most fascinating women in London, extremely clever, and a centre of attraction in

Society. She also possessed that most delightful gift, a lovely speaking voice. Her tastes were rather inclined to be Bohemian, and unfortunately she was a born gambler, with disastrous effect on my brother's fortune, he being a very weak and over-indulgent husband. At my brother's house in Lowndes Square Mrs. Langtry first made her bow to London Society, and first met the late King Edward. I well remember the late Lord Ranelagh asking my sister-in-law one night at dinner whether she would send an invitation for a reception that she was about to hold to a friend of his who he said came from Jersey, was very beautiful, and whose name was Mrs. Langtry. There were at that time in London Society three ladies who gave rise to the title "professional beauties," namely, Mrs. Langtry, Mrs. Luke Wheeler, and Mrs. Cornwallis West. I knew them all three well, and the first two intimately.

Speaking of Lord Ranelagh reminds me of a rather amusing incident. Although very advanced in years he could never realise that he was an old man ; he was always dressed in the height of fashion, and was frequently to be seen in public with the most youthful and not always most refined mem-

bers of the Corps de Ballet. I was standing one day on the platform of Waterloo Station when my attention was drawn to the fact that the people on the platform were all convulsed with laughter, and all staring upward in the direction of the steps, which in those days used to lead from the bridge above to the platform below. On looking in that direction I saw a queer group—old Lord Ranelagh, with his glossy top hat tilted on one side at a jaunty angle, a large flower in his buttonhole, and a look of conscious pride on his face, descending the steps to the platform, while two young ladies, or perhaps I ought to say two young persons of the usual class whom he was escorting, were walking behind him in step, each of them with her two hands raised, her thumbs to her nose and the fingers of both hands extended behind poor old Ranelagh's head, in the attitude that used to be known to schoolboys as "cocking snooks."

Besides "professional beauties" there were in those days a certain number of men who were famous for their extraordinary good looks, although of different types, of whom the best known were Charlie Buller, Ralph Vivian, Jack Stracey, Jim Duncombe, and Lord Rossmore (all in the



Guards), also Adrian Hope, Lord Battersea, Beauty Blunt, and Conway the actor. All these men were strikingly handsome in their own styles. I think, however, that taking all things into consideration poor old Charlie Buller was the handsomest man I have ever seen in my life, and that was the opinion of ninety-eight men and women out of every hundred in London. He was in fact almost too good-looking for a man—of medium height, a magnificent figure of a man, possessed of great strength, and the finest amateur boxer in England, in fact there were probably not more than three professionals who would have stood any chance of beating him. The great world's champion, Jim Mace, was of that opinion, for he told me so one day when I was boxing with him at Brighton. Charlie Buller had wavy dark chestnut hair, perfectly chiselled features, perfect teeth, and beautiful blue eyes with long dark curling lashes—in fact, he was, as I have already remarked, much too good-looking. He was also a very good cricketer and a fine racquet player. One of his favourite amusements was breaking pokers across his arm. Poor Charlie, perhaps he never showed to greater advantage than when standing bare-



headed in his long white coat in the racquet courts at Prince's. I have seen him on those occasions walk out into the cricket ground there on match days just to see how the game was going and have seen the women gaze in astonishment at the apparition with an admiration that they could not even pretend to hide.

Talking of boxing reminds me that I used often to box in those days and was desperately keen. I had an empty room on the top floor at Mount Street set apart for the purpose. By the advice of Charlie Buller I began with young Reid as my first professional instructor, and later on, also by his advice, I went to Batt Mullens, and also occasionally to Ned Donnelly; afterwards I used to spar with the great Jim Mace himself. I have no hesitation in saying that Batt Mullens was the most perfect judge of distance I ever saw, and I have both seen and sparred with very many. I am sometimes asked who I consider was the greatest fighter of my time and I have no hesitation in saying that Peter Jackson was the flower of the flock. He was a coloured man with a great white heart, a fine character, universally respected by every man and woman of all classes who ever knew him.

I think I must have inherited my great love of fighting and sport generally from my grandfather, Sir John Sebright, who was one of the chief supporters of Tom Cribb and of the Prize Ring in general, as well as of hunting and other sports. At one time when he was High Sheriff of Hertfordshire he brought off a great fight in the park at Beechwood. It was either Tom Cribb v. Horton, Dutch Sam v. Cropley, or else Gulley v. Gregson—I am not quite sure which. Talking of Gulley reminds me that he afterwards became a book-maker and finally Member of Parliament for Pontefract, being put up by my grandfather.

My grandfather was amongst other things recognised as one of the greatest authorities in the world on hawks and hawking. He also founded the well-known breed of Sebright Bantams. I fully believe in teaching boys to box. I am certain that it teaches them to keep their temper and have always found that the knowledge that you can box and that you possess a real big punch keeps you out of a lot of rows instead of drawing you into them; while on the other hand, if you are dragged into a row against your will, you know what is necessary to protect yourself and others.

My sister-in-law, Lady Sebright, became bitten with a taste for speculation on the Stock Exchange, and among her friends was a Mr. Hume Webster, the senior partner in the firm of Webster, Hoare and Co., a firm of private bankers and financiers in Abchurch Lane. I entered the business and remained in it for about eighteen months. After this I joined a well-known firm on the Stock Exchange, Messrs. Swabe, Ransford and Schiff, on what is known as the half commission business. Talking of Mr. Hume Webster, he was quite as well known on the Turf as in the world of Finance, owing to the fact that he founded at his place, Marden Park, in Surrey, a breeding stud of considerable importance. The annual yearling sale at that establishment became one of the regular features of the flat-racing season.

Hume Webster came to a tragic end ; having got into financial difficulties in the City he went down to Marden Park as usual for the week-end, and on Sunday, after inspecting his Stud and quite quietly and unconcernedly giving instructions to his gardener, he strolled up the park into a wood and there shot himself. His wife was a charming woman and a great friend of mine. I have in my



time known and had to do with many of the financiers who have been unusually prominent and filled the public eye. Among these were Baron Grant, Dr. Strousburgh, and Whittaker Wright. Baron Grant somehow or other never impressed me as a great financier, or even as a particularly clever man. I used to see him fairly frequently at Abchurch Lane, for he was very intimate with Hume Webster and they had considerable business relations. I was far too young and inexperienced to form any judgment whatever about the real nature of Baron Grant's financial operations, but he incurred a considerable amount of abuse and some wag on the Stock Exchange posted up the following verse :

Kings may give titles,  
Titles don't give honour,  
Titles without honour  
Are but a "Baron Grant."

Dr. Strousburgh was a German Jew and a man of very great ability. His financial operations in Germany, Turkey, Russia and elsewhere in Europe, were enormous and mostly successful. He resided in Berlin in a large house which is now the British Embassy. He amassed an immense fortune, but unfortunately for him while in Russia, where he



was endeavouring to collect a very large sum of money owing to him by the Government of that country, he was arrested and imprisoned in a fortress. Bismarck made several demands for his release, and although it is not generally known it is none the less a fact that the question of his release at last became so acute as nearly to cause war between the two Empires. He eventually regained his liberty but was never paid the money, and I believe finally died a comparatively poor man. Lord Loftus, British Ambassador at Berlin, told me many interesting stories about Dr. Strousburgh. For some time in Berlin Society he became almost the sole topic of conversation; this grew at last so tedious that an anti-Strousburgh Society was formed, every member of which consented to be fined a certain sum if he mentioned him at dinner. For my own part I liked him and he had a strong and interesting personality.

Whittaker Wright I saw frequently at one time, and was to a great extent the means of his starting in business in London. When I first met him at the office of my solicitor he was a poor man, but I came to the conclusion that he was a man of very considerable ability. I arranged a plan by which I was successful in raising £10,000 for him to start

business in the City. He was in many ways a most remarkable man ; he possessed a wonderfully clear brain, a strong masterful will, and was quite unable even then to think in anything less than millions. To his mind to wish for a thing and to possess it, or to desire that such and such a thing should be done and to have it done, were one and the same thing. He must have spent a fortune at his place, Lee Park, in Surrey, on its winter garden and its billiard room under the lake, with its roof of glass where you can see the fish swimming about over your head. I used to dine with him pretty frequently at his house in London and used to gasp with astonishment at his habits on those occasions. He used to have a quart bottle of champagne and a quart bottle of port placed in front of him ; he would drink them one after the other, placing them when empty on the floor under his chair. Then when the ladies got up and left the room he would pull his chair up to the table and embark on a large number of liqueurs. Then afterwards, in the billiard room, he would make a start on brandies and soda. He would in the meantime smoke a number of large cigars. The strange thing about it all was that I have never in my life seen him otherwise than perfectly sober in

the strictest sense of the word, nor have I been able to find anybody else who had. In addition to all this he took no exercise and would never walk a yard if he could help it.

I well remember one day I met him at the top of the Row as he was about to leave the Park. He came up to me and asked me to dine with him that night, remarking at the same time, "I hope you will not mind my turning you out early as I have got some work to do." I replied that I did not mind at all. We dined tête-à-tête; during dinner and afterwards he consumed his usual amount of wine, liqueurs, etc. After dinner we played billiards till three o'clock in the morning, when he remarked "I am sorry, old chap, but I am afraid I must turn you out now as I have got to draw the prospectus of the Abaris Corporation!"

Poor Whittaker Wright, he also came to a tragic end; criminal proceedings were taken against him in connection with some financial misconduct, either real or imaginary, and he contrived to poison himself immediately after hearing the verdict and sentence. I know nothing whatever of the facts of the case that was put forward by the prosecution; nor do I know whether he was guilty or inno-



cent. The fact of his having been found guilty in a highly intricate financial case of that description by a Jury that had to deal with matter which could be understood only with the greatest difficulty by men whose minds and brains had been trained for years in that particular direction, conveys nothing whatever to my mind one way or the other. There is something, however, that I do know, and that disgusts me beyond measure, and that is that many men in the City as well as the West End who never had a shilling and others who had precious little until they knew Whittaker Wright, and who owe their fortunes to him, are to-day among his fiercest detractors and are loudest in abusing him. Some of these men ought to be well kicked. However, no sane man of the world with any knowledge of life would ever dream of expecting anything else.

Before quitting the subject of the City and City people, I find myself wondering how many of my readers will remember a strange character named Bob Bristowe, who was formerly on the Stock Exchange. A cheery and breezy man, he was in the habit of doing himself well, or it might be said that on many occasions he did himself "not wisely but too well." Among other pursuits he was very



fond of shooting, and on a certain memorable occasion he invited a number of his friends to shoot with him at his place somewhere (I think) in the county of Kent. A portion of the ground over which they were to shoot was surrounded by a high wall and was I believe a kind of park of considerable extent. The day before the shooting party was to take place he procured, through the agency of Mr. Jamrach, the famous dealer in wild animals, a collection of livestock containing, to the best of my recollection, a jaguar, two or three leopards, several wild boars, etc. These he had transported overnight to the scene of the next day's sport, and turned down in a large wood within the enclosure above mentioned. All the friends whom he had invited to join him were more or less hard drinkers. The following morning, when the guns had been placed at their various posts, the beaters began to drive the wood, when to the astonishment and horror of his friends who had retired to rest only in the early hours of the morning, after an unusually thick night, they saw approaching them the wild animals I have just described. They did not wait for any enquiry but one and all made tracks for home at full speed. This exploit was the cause of

considerable trouble in the locality, as well it might be.

After a while I got thoroughly tired of the City and turned my back upon it with the keenest delight, and can honestly say that I have not for one single moment regretted my departure.

## CHAPTER IV

My hunting box. The Pytchley Hounds. The Colonel's Birthday Present. Prince Metternich. Albert Muntz and Lord Willoughby de Broke. Bob Yerburch.

**H**UNTING now more than ever engaged my attention, and I decided to take a hunting box at Rugby, together with my friend, Mr. Robert Yerburch, afterwards M.P. for Chester, and President of the Navy League. Bob Yerburch was one of the smartest men in London, and to see him dressing on a hunting morning was quite a study in character. He was, however, one of the boldest and hardest men to hounds I have ever seen, in fact nothing, however big, would stop him. We were joined shortly afterwards by Count Metternich (afterwards Prince Metternich) and Mr. Jerwyn Jones, of Pantglass. The latter was a good horseman and a good man to hounds. Metternich was



not a good horseman, but he was a charming companion, and eventually became Austrian Ambassador in London.

I think that perhaps all things considered I never had a better time during my bachelor life than at Rugby. What could one want more? Four bachelor friends who all got on well together, plenty of the best horses in England to ride (I myself had twelve), perfect health and strength, the Pytchley and North Warwickshire hounds to hunt with, and a neighbourhood with plenty of nice people, among them my cousin Sir Reynold Knightley (afterwards Lord Knightley) at Fausley, the Townshends at Coton House, and Mrs. Arnold Crossley and her pretty sister, Mrs. Charlie Cadogan, at Springhill. The latter lady was a great friend of mine and frequently rode my horses. Naturally in the Pytchley country there were many really good men to hounds, among whom I must mention Bob Yerburgh, Jerwyn Jones, Captain Ridell (well known as Puggy Ridell), who was not only a hard man to hounds but also a very fine horseman with beautiful hands, Mr. Gillpin (the well-known gentleman jockey), Jerry Dalglish, and occasionally Bay Middleton, well-known as the intimate friend and pilot in the hunting field of the late



Empress Elizabeth of Austria. I must not, however, forget to mention another very hard man to hounds, namely, Mr. Albert Muntz, a heavy man and not a finished horseman. He was always splendidly mounted, went very hard, and gave very high prices for his horses, as he could well afford, and it took something very much out of the ordinary to stop him. He had however one peculiarity, which was that in no circumstances whatever, even though he might have been left at the start, would he ever admit that any good run could possibly take place without his being either absolutely first up at the finish, or at all events among the first three or four. This habit of course was well-known to everybody and became a sort of standing joke, for instance the following amusing incident. The Pytchley had a very good run from Crick Gorse, in which Albert Muntz took part. The following morning he wired to Lord Willoughby de Broke: "Splendid day, eight mile point, very fast, only three in it," whereupon Lord Willoughby de Broke wired back "Who were the other two?"

The harmony of our existence was somewhat disturbed for a while by the arrival of a certain Colonel in the Guards, who asked leave to join our party

and who succeeded in making himself decidedly unpopular. The circumstances which ultimately led to his departure were as follows : Bob Yerburch and myself had invited Mrs. Arnold Crossley and Mrs. Charlie Cadogan to dinner, when we discovered by chance that the Colonel's birthday fell on the same day. On the morning of that day, as there was a hard frost and no hunting, Bob and I strolled up to the stables to inspect our horses. On our way back through the town we noticed in the window of a small shop an immense pair of red flannel stays. We stood for a moment gazing at them in awestruck silence and then, in the words of the poet, it was a case of

“Two minds with but a single thought,” and we both exclaimed “A birthday present for the Colonel.” Into the shop we went, and to the astonishment of the young lady behind the counter we purchased the stays, and having had them carefully packed in a box with several sheets of tissue paper and a layer of cotton wool, we had it addressed to Colonel ———, marked outside “This side up, with care,” and returned home well pleased with our bargain. The box was handed to Yerburch's valet, or my valet, I forget which, with orders to bring it into the dining room and hand it

to Colonel ——— directly the soup was on the table. That evening, when our guests and ourselves had sat down to dinner, the parcel was duly brought into the room and handed to Colonel ———, who remarked : “ Ah, a birthday present for me, and by the way it is packed it ought to be something worth having.” His interest increased as he removed layer after layer of tissue paper. At last out rolled our birthday present. Naturally everybody at the table roared with laughter, but instead of taking the joke in good part he lost his temper and flung them into the fire, where they gave out a terrible smell, whereupon Bob Yerburch, rising from his seat, went to the fireplace and picking up the tongs seized the stays and started to carry them toward the door, but was intercepted by Colonel ———, and a violent struggle began for the possession of the tongs. Both men had now lost their tempers, especially the Colonel. The ladies in the meantime were in a state of alarm, not having supposed for one moment that we should include an impromptu fight in the evening’s entertainment. I jumped up and forcibly separated them, but not before a portion of the flaming stays had parted with the tongs and found a final resting place in the soup tureen, which was



the most annoying part of the whole business, as we had at that time a remarkably good cook.

The next morning we held a council of war and decided unanimously to ask Colonel ———, who had so long disturbed the harmony of our peaceful abode, to pack up and go, which he did.

Just before our second season at Rugby, Jerwyn Jones decided to go abroad for the winter and very kindly lent me for the season the whole of his stud, which included some of the best hunters in England. All of them had been bought from the famous Bob Chapman at top prices, among them a famous horse called Harkaway, with which he had won a big steeplechase at Aylesbury. Consequently, as I already had twelve nailing good horses of my own I had the time of my life as far as hunting was concerned.

At about this time, finding myself in London on a Monday morning, I strolled into Tattersall's to witness the dispersal by auction of the Stud of Billie Markham, at that time well-known with the Quorn and Cottesmore Hounds. As I entered the Yard one of his horses was being led up for sale. He was a great blood horse, over sixteen hands high (called Shackabac), and yet up to a good deal of weight. He had all the appearance of a Grand



National winner. I fully expected that he would fetch a very high price, but began to bid for him, and to my intense astonishment he was knocked down to me for a sum of £60—the smallness of which caused me considerable suspicion. I could not, however, find anything wrong with him and sent him to Rugby. I was not long in discovering the reason for which I had been able to buy him so cheaply. I had in my service at that time a very famous rough-rider, named Tom Warr, who was known all over Leicestershire, so I told him to ride the horse and see what it was made of. I did not hunt myself that day, but in the evening I sent for Warr to report to me generally on the horse's behaviour. He informed me with a grin on his face that the first thing the horse did in Rugby was to enter a linendraper's shop, in spite of all his endeavours to prevent it. He afterwards charged a brick wall with his head, but eventually Warr managed, after various adventures, to get him to the Meet. When the hounds ran the horse at first behaved splendidly; he jumped everything, no matter how big, in his stride, and nothing in the whole field could catch him. He then suddenly, for no apparent reason, ran away in the opposite direction for three miles. In spite of the horse's

misdeeds Jerwyn Jones was so taken with him that he asked me whether I would sell him, as he was going to have a day with the Windsor Drag. I accordingly sold him the horse for £10, and he took him with him to Windsor. Three days afterwards I went to London, and in the afternoon called upon Jerwyn Jones in Charles Street, Berkeley Square. On my arrival his valet told me that his master was laid up, and on being shown into his bedroom I found my unfortunate friend in bed with two broken ribs and a broken leg, which he informed me had been caused by his recent purchase running away with him through a big wood and jumping into a chalk pit, where he had broken his own neck.

## CHAPTER V

My visit to Dinard. My Supposed Duel with Lord St. Leonards. I visit Hardwick. Mr. Barwick Baker. My Adventure at a Hunt Ball. Talking in Railway Carriages.

THE following August at the close of the London season Bob Yerburch and I decided to go for a trip to Dinard, where there was at that time quite a considerable English colony, besides a large number of English visitors who had gone over there for the season. In the course of this visit a certain incident occurred that was much talked about at the time and eventually got into the papers. I refer to my duel, or rather my supposed duel, with Lord St. Leonards, for as a matter of fact it never took place. As the story has been frequently misrepresented I take this opportunity of stating exactly what did, as well as what did not happen.

Lord St. Leonards had a most violent and ungovernable temper. In Lady St. Leonards he also had a most attractive and charming wife, of whom he was so madly jealous that his jealousy amounted to a positive mania, being exhibited toward every man who even spoke to or danced with her. Lady St. Leonards was a friend of mine and a frequent dancing partner at balls in London. Shortly after our arrival at Dinard Bob Yerburch and myself, together with two or three other men, decided to give a ball at the Casino, and Lord and Lady St. Leonards being at Dinard at the time were invited as a matter of course. I danced two or three times with Lady St. Leonards, and while we were in the middle of a waltz Lord St. Leonards suddenly plunged through the crowded room, seized his wife roughly by the arm and began to heap at the top of his voice the most objectionable epithets upon her and upon myself. Naturally all dancing stopped and we became the centre of a horrified crowd. I stood between Lord St. Leonards and his wife and invited the former to follow me into the garden of the Casino, which he did, together with Bob Yerburch, the Hon. Hubert Duncombe, and I think Colonel Hamilton. I there and then demanded from him a full apology in writing, both



to Lady St. Leonards and to myself, which he refused to give, with the result that on the following morning I sent him by hand a challenge, stating at the same time that if he refused to meet me I would publicly thrash him in the Casino. He accepted my challenge, and a duel was arranged, the place of meeting to be an island near the coast and the weapons to be pistols. Lord St. Leonards, however, thought better of it and sent me a letter of apology which I agreed to accept. As it has sometimes been suggested that it was I who climbed down (at least so I have heard) I may mention that the letter in question is at the present moment still in my possession.

The following winter I spent in hunting at Rugby, country house parties, etc. I also went on a visit to Hardwick Court, Gloucestershire, the residence of Mr. Barwick Baker, taking with me three of my horses, and hunted with Lord Fitzhardinge and with the Duke of Beaufort. Mr. Barwick Baker was one of the most lovable of men and was respected by all who knew him. Among other things he was the leading spirit in the movement that brought about the establishment of reformatory schools for boys who had been convicted and who would otherwise have been sent to

prison. His younger son, Henry Baker, was one of the best of fellows and one of the finest performers over a country to hounds in all England. Mrs. Barwick Baker was my cousin as well as my godmother.

The Berkeley Vale that is hunted by Lord Fitzhardinge is a fine sporting country, its only fault being that after a little rain the grassland is inclined to ride unusually heavy. There used to be quite a good shoot at Hardwick, but the whole atmosphere of the place was hunting first and foremost. In the course of one of my many visits to Hardwick I had a very unpleasant experience, which, however, taught me a useful lesson that I have never forgotten. Together with the rest of the house party I attended the Gloucester Hunt Ball; we arrived rather early and I stood for some minutes on the landing outside the ballroom watching the latest arrivals coming up the grand staircase, and at the same time carrying on a conversation with a man whom I was frequently meeting in the hunting field, but whose name I did not know. Suddenly I noticed a woman coming up toward us—a most extraordinary looking woman, with masses of dyed hair, her face enamelled, and her lips smothered in carmine. Nobody had ever seen her before and

there was an awestruck silence as she approached the top of the staircase. Without looking at my companion I remarked to him in a low voice, "Good heavens, what an appalling looking woman! How on earth did she get here? She looks like the sort of woman who perambulates the Haymarket at one o'clock in the morning." By that time this strange apparition had reached us whereupon my companion took my arm and leading me up to her said, "Let me introduce you to my wife!" I have been in some queer situations in my life, as well as some highly dangerous ones, but on the whole I do not think I ever felt so "knocked out" as I did at that moment.

This reminds me that it is a most dangerous habit to talk too freely in railway carriages, especially when you mention names. I was once travelling down from Victoria Station (to join a house party in Sussex) and the carriage was full, all the passengers being men. We had hardly got out of London when one of the occupants of the carriage mentioned my name and in a very short time I was the sole topic of conversation among my fellow passengers. They discussed my life, my conduct, my personal appearance, and everything else about me, to all of which I listened with the keenest



amusement. Finally the gentleman who occupied the corner seat opposite me leant forward and addressing me said, "Have you ever seen him?" "Well, I have," I replied. "Indeed, well now what is he like?" "Well," said I in a thoughtful meditative manner, "he is about my height and build with a fair moustache and not unlike me," whereupon my questioner or questioners, for they were all questioning me now, proceeded to enquire about his personal character, or rather to be strictly correct my personal character. My nearest neighbour said to me, "Now can you tell me, sir, what sort of man he really is?" "Well", said I, "he wants knowing, a lot of knowing, but when you do know him, what a man, sir! You could not find his equal." By this time I had reached my destination, and stepping out of the train I bade them a courteous Good Evening.

On another occasion I was travelling on the Great Western Railway, there being only one occupant of the carriage besides myself. We got into conversation, and after a while began to discuss two or three of the great Public Schools. My companion was a particularly nice and intelligent man. Finally we began to discuss Radley, and I said I hoped that the present Warden of Radley



was not such a rotter as the Warden was in my day, upon which he remarked, “ I am afraid I ought not to express any opinion on that subject because I am the Warden of Radley ! ”

## CHAPTER VI

Drumochter. My Guests and the Furniture. Caroline Duchess of Montrose and Captain Machell. The Black Hare and a Narrow Escape.

**A**S I have already remarked, after my return from Dinard I went back to Rugby for the hunting season, and after that to London for the season as usual. I now came to the conclusion that I should never be happy unless I possessed a moor in Scotland, and having been furnished by some well-known agents with particulars of Scotch shootings that were to let, I picked out the one that I thought sounded most promising, a place called Drumochter in Inverness-shire, and went northward to see it. When I first saw the glorious scenery, including Loch Ericht with Ben Alder on the opposite side, I made up my mind to take the place and spend

there as much of my time as I could manage. When, however, I arrived at Drumochter Lodge I got rather a shock, for it was a horrible place. I was much amused at the expression on the face of the worthy factor (they call the Estate Agents in the Highlands factors) when he asked me how I liked the house, and I replied, "Take it away." And take it away they did, for to make a long story short I took a very long lease of the place from Colonel Macpherson of Cluny and built the present Drumochter Lodge, which is about as good a shooting box as you could find in Scotland. I also planted on the estate a large number of trees and improved it in various other ways. The building of the new house was begun only about five months before the shooting season. I was, however, determined to sleep in it on the night of the eleventh of August and begin shooting the next day. The contractors only just managed to get the workmen out of the house on the 9th. I arrived myself on the morning of the 11th together with my guests, the servants, and the furniture, all on the same train, which I should think is almost unique. I forget who were my guests on that occasion but remember that Lord Hopetoun (afterwards Lord Linlithgow) together with Arthur

Hay of the Scots Guards, and Horace Stopford of the Grenadier Guards, were of the party. We had very good sport at Drumochter and after my party had broken up I used to vary it occasionally by going over to shoot with Caroline Duchess of Montrose and her husband Mr. Stirling Crawford, at their place Dalnaspidal, which was only about four miles from me. Mr. Stirling Crawford, whom the Duchess had married as her second husband, was a man of considerable wealth. He was a most charming man and also one of the pillars of the English Turf. He won the Derby with Sefton, and the St. Leger with Craig Miller. Caroline Duchess of Montrose was one of the characters of her day and the stories about her are legion ; many of them are true and many of them probably untrue. On one occasion when I was staying at Dalnaspidal the party consisted so far as I can remember of Lord and Lady Kilmorey (just back from their honeymoon) Mr. Newton Ogle, and the famous Captain Machell. The Duchess decided to come and join us that day at luncheon. When luncheon time arrived we were sitting on the heather waiting for her to turn up when suddenly we saw a figure some little distance off which turned out to be the lady, stuck in a bog nearly up



to her waist ; her hat was on one side, and she was gesticulating wildly with both arms. Her appearance was so funny that it was impossible not to laugh. She was speedily rescued by two of the *gillies*, and on joining us looked from one to another for any sign of laughter on our faces. She thought she detected a smile on Machell's face, whereupon she addressed him in language which was to say the least of it pointed. Captain Machell had a most remarkable career. He began life as a subaltern in a line Regiment and developed considerable ability as a runner, jumper, etc. One of his favourite amusements was to stand on the hearthrug in front of the fireplace with his feet together and back himself to jump on to the mantelpiece, which he rarely failed to do. He then took up racing, and before long became one of the leading owners as well as the manager from time to time of some of the greatest racing stables in England. He was also regarded, and justly so, as the shrewdest judge of turf affairs in the country. He was a bold determined better whenever he really knew something ; he engineered many great coups and amassed a considerable fortune. Poor Machell very nearly came to a most tragic end. His health had been bad for some time ; he then

had a very severe attack of influenza, and much against the advice of his doctor insisted on attending Liverpool Races. He was extremely ill in his hotel and became delirious. In the course of the evening the people passing in the street below were horrified to see the figure of a man in his night shirt seated on the parapet of the hotel with his feet dangling over the street. The figure in question turned out to be Machell. The great question was how to get him back again; finally his valet who had been with him a number of years was sent for, and by some means or other managed to get him safely back to his bed. He, however, died a few months afterwards.

While I am on the subject of shooting I should like to mention an incident that occurred at a shooting party at my cousin's, the late Lord Gage's place, Firle, in Sussex. At dinner the night before our first day's shoot Lord Gage told us he had been informed by his head keeper that the man had seen a fully grown jet-black hare in one of the coverts. I asked Lord Gage whether in the event of my shooting it myself I might keep it, and he said yes. Surely enough shortly after the first drive of the next day's shoot there were cries from the beaters of "the black hare." It was, however, killed by

General Gage, and I have always regretted that I was not so fortunate as to obtain this curiosity. I may be wrong, but from information that we then obtained from the Editor of "The Field" and from other sources, I believe that there is hardly any other authentic case of a jet-black English hare having been shot in this country. This particular day's shoot was otherwise eventful for me, as through his careless handling of my second gun my loader shot my cap off my head, but fortunately without injuring me in any way whatever. This I think is about as narrow an escape as one can have without serious injury.

In the following year we broke up our bachelor party at Rugby and I decided to move my horses to Leighton Buzzard, living myself at my Chambers in Mount Street in the hunting season, and going down to Leighton by train on hunting days. This I did for two seasons, hunting almost exclusively with Mr. Selby Lowndes' hounds in what is known as the Vale of Aylesbury. Hunting by train from London has its disadvantages, one of them being that (speaking for myself) I always found myself, after a long day's hunting and the railway journey back to London, so tired and sleepy that I was good for nothing in the evening. This reminds me of a



practical joke that was played upon me by a friend of mine. I had returned home from Leighton after a very hard day's hunting and was more than usually tired when a friend informed me that he had taken a box at the Alhambra for that night and invited me to join the party, which consisted of himself, one other man and a certain actress better known for her good looks than her talents on the stage. I accepted the invitation, and having arrived at their box and seated myself next to the fair lady of the party, I shortly afterwards fell asleep and remained in that condition throughout the whole of the performance. I woke up about 1 o'clock in the morning, not knowing in the least where I was, to find myself in darkness with the house closed. When I looked up I could see not a soul in the building but myself. After groping about for some time and shouting I at last encountered the fireman, whom I firmly believe had been "squared" by my host, and was released.

Talking of going to sleep reminds me of an experience of mine while travelling on the London & South Western Railway. It was in the middle of winter and a bitterly cold night. I was going to Weybridge, which is only about twenty miles from London, but had not been in the train many



minutes when I fell asleep. When I woke up I looked at my watch and was surprised to find that it was long after the time at which we ought to have arrived at Weybridge. In the meantime the train tore on through the darkness; we eventually pulled up at a station and putting my head out of the window I enquired the name of the station from a porter, who replied, "Southampton, sir!" "Why," said I, "I want to go to Weybridge." "Well this is Southampton anyway," said he, "and there is no train back to Weybridge to-night." I eventually, however, travelled back in the guard's van of a goods train, arriving at some unearthly hour in the morning at the Oaklands Park Hotel where I was staying.

## CHAPTER VII

London Hostesses. I mistake my host for the butler. Lady Salisbury. Lady Marion Alford. Lady Goldsmid's Musical Evenings. Tranby Croft and the Wilsons. My Experiences in the Train with Lord Portarlington. Lord Henry Vane-Tempest and Mr. Peel. The Origin of the Bachelors' Club.

**I** MUST now speak more particularly of my social life in London Society and of some of the people whom I numbered among my intimate friends and acquaintances. There were at that time in London a great many hostesses; it is impossible to remember all of them, but among others who occur to my mind I must mention Lady Salisbury, Lady Wimborne, the Duchess of Westminster, the Duchess of Bedford, Lady Waldegrave, Lady Egerton of Tatton, Mrs. Nilebois, Lady Herbert of Lee, Louisa Lady Ash-

burton, Lady Hayter, Lady Londonderry, Lady Ardilawn, her sister-in-law Lady Iveagh, Mrs. Adrian Hope, Mrs. Lowther, Lady Battersea, Lady de Rothschild, Lady Goldsmid, Mrs. Bischoffsheim, Mrs. Henry Oppenheim, Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, and Mrs. Arthur Wilson—all of whose houses I frequented from time to time.

With Lord and Lady Salisbury I was on the most intimate terms of friendship and used to lunch at their house in Arlington Street about twice a week throughout the season. Like most really great men Lord Salisbury, who was at that time Prime Minister, was always most kind and considerate to young men, and used to draw them out on the topics of the day. So although I have been acquainted with most of the famous men of the day among my own countrymen and a good many of those of other nations, I shall always consider Lord Salisbury one of the most delightful companions I have ever met. Lady Salisbury, a very great friend of mine, was an extremely shrewd and clever woman; she used to make many people feel nervous, in consequence of her habit of gazing very fixedly at them in silence with a peculiar contraction of the eyes while they were talking, which made her appear to be making a highly critical

analysis of every word they uttered. She was a most kindly woman, and a good friend.

The Duchess of Westminster, whom also I used to see frequently, was a cheery kindly woman and a good hostess, with an abundance of fair hair and features of the Roman type. She has been dead many years; the last time I saw her I remember well. We were walking round the garden of Grosvenor House together with the Count de Jansé at 4 o'clock in the morning after a big ball that she had given, the little fairy lamps with which the trees in the garden were illuminated were flickering down, and I remember that we discussed music. I never saw her again, and I did not guess that her life was drawing to a close.

The Duchess of Bedford, who lived in a large house in Eaton Square, used to entertain a great deal, but the Duke was a recluse and there were many of their regular guests who did not even know him by sight, I myself being among the number. One night at a ball given by them I took a lady with whom I had been dancing down to supper; my partner having stated that she would like some champagne I looked round for a waiter, and seeing an elderly man standing on the other side of the table, whom I took for the ducal butler, I asked him



to bring my partner some champagne. To this request he paid no attention. When I repeated my order in a rather raised tone of voice he turned round and walked out of the room. At that moment a friend of mine who was sitting near me exclaimed, "Be quiet you silly ass, that's the Duke."

Lady Ermyntrude Russell, one of the daughters of the Duchess of Bedford, was one of the best dancers in London and one of my most frequent and regular partners. She afterwards married Sir Edward Mallet, our Ambassador in St. Petersburg.

From time to time we hear the term "grande dame" applied to this lady or that in London Society, but I very much doubt whether there has ever existed in England during the last forty years, or for the matter of that at any time, a lady to whom this term could be more justly applied than to Lady Marion Alford, the mother of the late Lord Brownlow. She was a most charming and talented woman and in every way most distinguished. She was one of my dearest and most intimate friends and I have spent many happy hours at her beautiful home Alford House.

I must here make particular mention of Lady Goldsmid as a hostess. I do not think that any

woman ever understood better the art of entertaining. She was an Italian by birth (I think a Venetian) and married Sir Julian Goldsmid, a man of great wealth. The passion of her life was fine music and her beautiful house in Piccadilly became a principal centre of the finest music, and at her Wednesday nights in the season she used to gather together some of the greatest artistes and the finest musical talent in London.

I may here mention that I was myself blessed with a voice and used often to sing in London and elsewhere both in public and private. I used to sing regularly at all Lady Goldsmid's musical receptions and have sung with de Soria, Christine Nilsson, Calve, Sembrich, and many other great artistes. Sir Julian Goldsmid was also the owner of a very beautiful place near Tunbridge Wells called Summerhill, where also I used to be a frequent visitor. Sir Julian had no son and eight daughters, and I well remember Lady Goldsmid on my first visit to Summerhill calling them all together in a line like soldiers, to show them to me, making them stand at attention, and then saying, "What do you think of that?" Lady Goldsmid was a very graceful woman, rather slight, with a

quantity of beautiful golden hair, and looked particularly well at night.

Mrs. Arthur Wilson lived in Grosvenor Crescent and also had a place called Tranby Croft near Hull, which was the scene of the famous Tranby Croft baccarat scandal, at which I barely missed being present, having been invited to form one of the house-party on that occasion, but as it happened I had already accepted another invitation for the same date. The case will always be remembered owing to the fact that the late King Edward (then Prince of Wales), who was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wilson at the time, was afterwards called as a witness in the Law Courts in the action for libel that arose from the events that took place on that occasion.

As I have already stated in these pages, I was desperately keen on boxing, and also I am afraid to some extent on fighting, but I always had a rooted dislike to what is known as bear fighting among friends, for I have known many occasions on which it has been the cause of real ill-feeling between men who had previously been friends, and it frequently begins as bear fighting but ends with real fighting. One of my closest friends was George Damer, afterwards Lord Portarlington. He was in the

Guards—a remarkably handsome man, a very good figure, and possessed of great strength ; in fact John Gladstone and he were then considered the two strongest men in the Guards. Unfortunately George Damer and I both centred our affection on the same lady. It happened by chance that toward me that feeling was returned by the lady in question, but not toward George Damer. This caused some bitterness of feeling in his mind toward myself. We had both spent the week-end at the house of the lady and her mother, and on the Monday we all four travelled up to London by train. Shortly after the train had left the station George began to chaff me, but with a distinct tinge of bitterness behind. This I took with the utmost good humour ; he then started bear fighting in the carriage and did all he could to push me off the seat, which although he was over 15 stone and I was 12 stone 7, he failed to do. This so much enraged him that in a very short time he completely lost his temper, seized me by the throat, and in a minute we were locked in a desperate struggle and engaged in a real fight. The small space of a railway carriage is a very unsuitable place in which to give away two stone in weight to a fit and angry man ; we were both of us using every ounce of strength



we possessed, and sometimes one was on top and sometimes the other. All this time the two ladies in the carriage were in a state of consternation. At last I made a final and desperate effort to get the upper hand and succeeded in throwing him heavily, but unfortunately I threw him on to the lady's mother, who in her turn knocked over her daughter, with the result that both ladies were on the floor of the carriage, George Damer on the top of them, and I on the top of him. In falling George Damer struck his arm with great force against the brass handle of the door and injured it. Just at this moment we pulled up at the station in London and formed a funny looking party when we emerged from the carriage. The very next morning I had been walking in the Row and strolled across the open part of the Park in the direction of the Marble Arch on my way to lunch with Lady Battersea at Surrey House; there was on the path coming toward me only one solitary figure namely George Damer with one arm in a sling. He came straight up to me and holding out his uninjured hand exclaimed, "Shake hands, old man, it was all my fault and it served me right." We remained very good friends right up to the day of his death, which took place many years afterwards.

There was another occasion on which, although I was not myself concerned, I was a spectator of the trouble that arose from a bear fight between two friends. I was sitting one day in the smoking-room of the Bachelors' Club talking to Lord Henry Vane-Tempest, who was one of my dearest friends and to whom I was much attached, when a young fellow named Peel, who was in the 1st or 2nd Life Guards (I forget which) came into the room, and as he was passing the armchair in which Henry Vane-Tempest was sitting the latter said in a joking way, "Here young man, pick up that paper for me," pointing to a paper which he had dropped on the floor. Peel replied, "Pick it up yourself," where upon Vane-Tempest caught hold of his arm as he passed and pulled it downward toward the paper. One little thing led to another and, to cut a long story short, in a few seconds these two friends, both of them officers in the Life Guards, had completely lost their temper and were engaged in the smoking-room of the Bachelors' Club in a desperate fight, which they finished by rolling into the fender, each of them having hold of the other's throat. At this moment Jeffreys the hall porter rushed in, and he and I succeeded in parting them. Henry Vane-Tempest was one of the very best fellows I ever

knew and a real good sportsman in every sense of the word.

I should like to say something here about the origin of the Bachelors' Club, of which I was one of the four original founders. One day the late Augustus Lumley, who afterwards became Mr. Augustus Saville, suggested to me that my brother and I should join Mr. William Gillett and himself in giving a big ball at which Royalty were to be present in a house in Kensington that had been built but never occupied by Baron Grant, the City financier, to whom I have already referred in these pages. Baron Grant had purchased some filthy and most unsavoury slums off High Street, Kensington, which were almost entirely occupied by the lowest class of Irish, and were known as the Rookeries. These slums he pulled down and built upon the site a very large house with a marble staircase, which is now in Madame Tussaud's. He laid out behind the house a large garden in which he dug out quite a fair sized lake. My brothers and I agreed to Augustus Lumley's suggestion, and the outcome was the great Bachelors' Ball that was then given. We illuminated the lake with fairy lanterns and imported two or three gondolas for the amusement of our guests. After the ball was over we four sat



down to supper in the early hours of the morning and a suggestion was put forward—"Why not a Bachelors' Club?" The idea caught on. The present Club premises in Hamilton Place, Piccadilly, were secured and the Club founded.



## CHAPTER VIII

Her Royal Highness Princess Mary Duchess of Teck and the Duke of Teck. I fall asleep after dinner. Chesterfield House. I forget my own name. London Entertaining and Entertaining in Country houses. Cards. Smoking among women. I stay at the wrong house in the country. I dine at the wrong house in London.

**A**MONG the kindest and best friends I ever had were Her Royal Highness Princess Mary Adelaide Duchess of Teck and the Duke of Teck and their children, including Princess Mary, now Her Majesty Queen Mary. I was frequently their guest both at Kensington Palace and at White Lodge, Richmond Park. I do not think it possible to find more perfectly brought up children than Princes Francis, Adolphus and Alexander, and Princess May of Teck, and I always looked forward

to spending a week-end at White Lodge. This reminds me of an event that occurred at one of these week-end parties. I was at the time a martyr to dyspepsia in its most acute form, and one of the consequences of the attacks that nearly always took place immediately after dinner was an overwhelming inclination to sleep which nothing on earth could overcome. This inclination was always stronger if I sat near to or facing the fire. On this particular evening we were sitting after dinner in what (if my memory serves me correctly) was called the Gallery. Her Royal Highness was sitting in a large armchair before the fire, and I was seated on a footstool at her feet, when I began to feel one of my attacks coming on. I put up a great fight against the enemy, but bit by bit it overcame me, and my head sank lower and lower till at last it found a final resting place on Her Royal Highness' knee, to the horror of the assembled guests, whom I shocked still more by snoring audibly. At this period of my life these onsets of sleep were so frequent and so severe that at last I became afraid to accept any invitation to dine out or to stay at country houses for fear of falling asleep in the middle of dinner. At this time and for about two years afterwards something must have gone wrong

with my internal economy for not only did I have these overwhelming onsets of sleep but I was also troubled with the most extraordinary periods of absent-mindedness. I will here relate a few instances of this which may sound rather incredible, but are perfectly true.

I had accepted an invitation to dine at Chesterfield House with Mr. Charles Magniac, one of whose most strongly marked characteristics was his extreme punctuality at dinner and his intense dislike to any of his guests, or even any of his own family, being only one minute late for that meal. I went home to Mount Street that evening at my usual hour to dress for dinner, but for some reason or other I quite forgot that it was dressing time and imagined that it was time to go to bed. I accordingly got into my pyjamas for the night and went to bed where I was ultimately discovered by my valet nearly half an hour after the time when I ought to have been sitting at dinner at Chesterfield House. I dressed at express speed, jumped into my brougham, and drove to Chesterfield House, where to my horror the footman informed me that they had already been at dinner nearly an hour. I found myself seated at the table with a lady whose name I forget on one side of me, and the Duke of

Portland on my left, who whispered to me, "You will catch it." My host was, however, very nice about it after all, and when I explained to him the cause of my apparent rudeness he was highly amused and considerably astonished, as well he might be.

On another occasion I was dining at the Bachelors' Club, and having dressed for dinner I walked downstairs with my bedroom candle lit in my hand (there was no electric light in those days) but instead of blowing it out and placing it on the hall table I strolled up Mount Street with it lit in my hand for about sixty or seventy yards, when my valet overtook me and drew my attention to my mistake.

On another occasion I called one afternoon on Mrs. Monty Brune and on my way upstairs when the footman said, "What name shall I say, sir?" I suddenly realised to my horror that I had entirely forgotten my own name. I paused and stared at the footman, and he stared suspiciously at me, having I believe come to the hasty conclusion that I was a well-dressed burglar. Suddenly after an interval of probably about half a minute, which seemed to me at the time much longer, my memory began to work again. "Mr. Sebright," said I, in



much the same way as you suddenly fire a gun—so I was duly announced.

I have always been of opinion that no kind of entertaining on a large scale in London can in any way be compared to entertaining in country houses. In London entertainments there are far too many people and the whole procedure is far too formal and mechanical. In country-house parties the guests are frequently asked for the express purpose of meeting other guests, while as a rule all the rest of the party are either known to each other or at least belong to the same set, or else have some personal attribute that will make them interesting or agreeable companions for their fellow guests. In addition to this, many of the great house parties are assembled under the roofs of the most beautiful and historical of our old English homes; consequently, quite apart from the attraction of hunting and shooting in the Autumn and Winter, the surroundings themselves are a source of endless interest and delight. Personally during the London season I used always to look forward keenly to the time when the season would be over and country-house parties would begin, for with the one exception of musical evenings they are the only form of entertainment that really appealed to me. Country houses in

those days had one great advantage over the country houses of to-day, inasmuch as with a few exceptions one was not cursed with that most appalling of pastimes, cards, which frequently now-a-days spoils all social entertainments, and which is in my opinion the most boring pastime ever devised by man. Invented for the purpose of amusing an imbecile King, they were then, as the Yankee said, "verra nice and verra appropriate." Owing to this pestilential habit the art of conversation has almost died out, while the harm and misery that it has caused among men and also among married women, and even young girls, is simply incalculable.

Talking of country houses reminds me of an incident that happened to myself. I had been asked to go and stay with Mr. Howard Vyse, at Stoke Place, near Slough. I duly arrived at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon at Slough Station, but the carriage that had been sent to meet me had been delayed in some way or other; consequently on my arrival I could see no sort of conveyance except the station cabs, one of which I took, ordering the driver to take me to Stoke Park (instead of Stoke Place). On my arrival I paid him off, rang the bell and was admitted by two footmen, who proceeded

to get my luggage off the cab, which then began to drive at a leisurely pace down the park. In the meantime I had divested myself of my overcoat, and having generally straightened myself out, I was escorted by one of the footmen down a passage to one of the reception rooms of the house. Fortunately I then asked my guide, "Do you know whether Mr. Howard Vyse is at home?" meaning that I thought he might be in the garden, or somewhere about the place, whereupon he looked rather puzzled. "I do not know whether he is at home just now, sir," he replied, "but I know that he was last week." It was now my turn to be puzzled. At this moment an idea seemed to dawn upon him, and he said, "He does not live here, sir, he lives at Stoke Place." I did not wait to hear more, but fled back to the hall. Fortunately I always carried, and do to this day, a powerful dog whistle for use out shooting, or for cabs, etc. This I blew for all I was worth, with the result that the retreating cabman heard it, and after violent gesticulations from the footman and myself, he returned and once more took me under his wing, finally landing me at Stoke Place. I was then informed that Stoke Park was the property of a Mr. Coleman, and about a year afterwards I made that gentleman's acquaintance,

and while dining with him at his house in Grosvenor Square I told him all about that event much to his amusement.

Talking of the Stoke Park incident reminds me that I once actually sat down to table at a large dinner party in London to which I had never been invited, and where the host and hostess were unknown to me. What happened was as follows. It was the day of the Eton and Harrow match and I had spent most of the day at Lord's. Just before the close of play I met young Coleridge Kennard, who had just joined the Guards, whom I knew very well, but at that time I had never met any of his family, although I afterwards saw them frequently. His father had recently bought a house in Upper Grosvenor Street and asked me to dine with them that evening. I accepted the invitation, and at five minutes to eight presented myself at a house in Grosvenor Street (instead of Upper Grosvenor Street), the number of which also turned out to be wrong. I rang the bell and the door was opened by a footman who looked decidedly surprised to see me. He remarked, "They have nearly finished dinner, sir," a statement which astonished me considerably as I had arrived punctually at the time I was asked. He ushered me into the dining-room



where I found a large dinner-party consisting I should think of from fifteen to twenty people. My entry caused everybody suddenly to stop talking. In the meantime the footman pushed a chair up between two people at one end of the table and I sat down feeling decidedly uncomfortable, at the same time looking everywhere for young Kennard. After a short whispered conversation between the master of the house and the footman at the other end of the table, the former rose from his seat and came up to me. I immediately began to apologise for being late and told him that his son had distinctly bidden me to come at eight o'clock. He looked puzzled and then said, "Do you know I cannot help thinking that you have come to dine at the wrong house?" "But you are Colonel Kennard," said I. "No, I am not," he replied. I then explained exactly what had happened, stating who I was. He was charming, and said he knew me quite well by name and would have been

very pleased if I had remained to dinner only they were dining early because several of them were going to the theatre. He then escorted me to the hall door and I took my departure.

## CHAPTER IX

The Wimbledon Rifle Meeting. My Encounter with the "rudest woman in London." Ferdy Arkwright. I go to the most expensive hotel in London in order to economise. My uninvited guests. I entertain some friends to breakfast.

**A**MONG the regular social fixtures of the London Season in my day was the Wimbledon Rifle Meeting, at the conclusion of which it was customary for whoever was President for that year to entertain a large number of people to tea, and the various prizes which had been won during the week were then presented. Lord Brownlow happened to be President of the Association for that particular year, and Lady Brownlow asked me to come down and help her to entertain, which I did. I used in those days to be rather proud of my feet, and had

recently ordered from my bootmakers some very smart patent leather shoes, which had arrived the evening before the Wimbledon fixture. The following morning I put on my new shoes, which I found decidedly tight; however my vanity was too much for my prudence, so soothing my mind with the hope that the tightness would "wear off," I drove down to Wimbledon. As the day went on my trouble with my shoes, instead of "wearing off," increased to an alarming extent. Finally, after the prizes had been distributed, the time arrived for me to help Lady Brownlow to entertain. My particular duties were to meet the people in the Hall and find out their requirements; if they wanted tea I was to tell them where to go for it, and if they did not I was to pass them on to Lady Brownlow. This I did for some time, all the while changing from one foot to the other like a cat on hot bricks. At last, after I had ministered to the comfort of two or three hundred people, the agony became so intense that I could bear it no longer, so slipping quietly out of the main entrance I dived into the gorse bushes of the Common, and having sat down on the grass I pulled off my instruments of torture, and after flinging them in a fit of temper into the thickest part of the bushes, I started to run



across the public common in my socks, dodging from bush to bush all the departing guests whom I met in much the same way as a Red Indian would play at hide and seek with his enemy. Fortunately I caught sight of an empty hansom on the main road which was returning to London; across the open I fled at full speed, and having hailed the driver I jumped in and was driven home to my rooms in Mount Street, greatly astonishing my valet by arriving in my socks.

There were then in London Society several women who adopted a special rôle of being rude to men, particularly snubbing young men. There were two women who were notorious for this habit; I fell foul of them both, but neither of them was anxious for a second encounter. One of the two ladies in question, who was by far the worse of the two, was the sister of a very popular and much respected Peer, a most charming and courteous man of the old school, who had stayed with us at Beechwood. She was unmarried, very advanced in years, very made up, and always affected a girlish and coquettish manner. She was a most notorious gambler and could be, when she liked, the rudest woman in London. I was dining one night in Eton Square, at the house of a close friend of mine, a

very popular Colonel in the Household Cavalry. This lady was also one of the guests, and sat exactly opposite me. I had already been informed by a friend of mine that she had stated that I wanted "sitting on." I must here remark that it was fairly well-known by this time that I was living most extravagantly and far beyond my means. In the middle of dinner, in the lull of the conversation, Miss —— raised her lorgnette, and fixing her gaze upon me with a rude stare said in a loud and insolent tone: "Mr. Sebright, what is your income?" Whereupon I looked quietly across the table at her and said: "Miss——, what is your age?" The whole table exploded with laughter; the lady herself was in such a violent passion at having the tables turned on her so unexpectedly that she burst into tears of rage at the dinner table. Both my host and my hostess informed me after dinner that they considered I was perfectly justified in the circumstances, and that "it served her jolly well right."

My encounter with the other lady who went in for snubbing men was as follows: I was dining with the Comtesse de Polignac at her house in (I think) Charles Street, and I happened by chance to sit next to this lady. Immediately after we sat down

to dinner I addressed to her some remark or other, whereupon she looked at me and yawned, but took no notice. I repeated my remark with the same result. This happened a third time, and then she deliberately turned her back upon me. I was now however quite certain that the whole thing was a piece of deliberate and intentional rudeness, and leaning forward I said : “ If you only knew how hideously ugly you look when you make those faces you would not do so.” Strangely enough this lady and I from that time became great friends.

There used to be in those days a most quaint and original character called Ferdy Arkwright. He was a man of a certain age and had an impediment in his speech ; he was rather what women call a cheeky sort of man, but he was very good-hearted, immensely popular and very witty. He was dining one night at a large dinner party in London when a lady who was sitting next to him, and to whom he had addressed two or three remarks without eliciting any response, turned round and yawned in his face in a very rude manner. He bent forward and with a genial smile said : “ My d-d-dear l-l-lady, there is n-n-no o-o-occasion for you to s-s-s-wagger s-s-o much about it. I h-h-h-ave got my b-b-back teeth stopped with gold as well as you.”

On another occasion a lady who was sitting next to him at dinner kept pulling the table cloth in her direction. After a time this rather upset poor Ferdy, who, turning toward her, remarked : “ My d-d-d-ear, my d-d-dear, d-d-d-on’t take all the clothes.”

By this time my affairs were becoming involved and I had contracted a considerable number of debts. I gave up my stud of hunters, keeping only one horse, a chestnut, who was a brilliant hunter, and had originally belonged to Marcus Beresford. As he was also a very good hack I used to ride him regularly in the Park. I gave up my moor in Scotland and all my carriages and carriage horses, with the exception of my private hansom and two very fast trotters to draw it. I also gave up my rooms in Mount Street and moved to Parish’s Hotel in George Street, Hanover Square, which was the best residential hotel in London and anything but economical.

At this point I must mention a little incident that occurred shortly before I gave up my rooms in Mount Street, and that was rather an amusing experience. I was going out for a walk in the Park one morning, and had just opened the street door when I was confronted by a very evil-looking



person, who informed me that he was a bailiff and that he was there to take possession of my furniture and goods in general on behalf of a moneylender who had obtained judgment against me in the High Court. At that moment another equally unsavoury gentleman arrived on the scene, and immediately afterwards a third, all on the same job, but for different creditors. My chief anxiety was lest the steward of the Chambers might hear of it. I suddenly hit upon a brilliant idea. I had on the top floor of the house three spare bedrooms, two of which were furnished and the other unfurnished. The latter I used as a boxing ring, but into the two furnished rooms I quietly smuggled my uninvited guests, one of them with a room to himself, and the two others in the second room. I told them I should be in a position to pay the amount of their claims in two days' time, and that in the meantime if they would remain absolutely quiet and not make a sound I would keep them supplied with good food, etc., as well as papers and books, but that they must not smoke. I then locked them all three in and used to walk and ride about London with the keys in my pocket. I used to carry food to them thrice a day, and at the same time used to let them out one by one for various necessary pur-

poses, while I stood there like a gaoler, and then locked them up again. Needless to say that when I paid their claims and they took their departure their own financial positions had distinctly improved.

I lived at Parish's Hotel for some years, and there are two or three incidents that then occurred to me which I propose to mention. As I have already stated, I was by this time, I regret to say, heavily in debt, and among other debts there were several judgments against me in the County Court which had been followed by committal orders. I had a suite of rooms at Parish's, and one morning when I woke up I rubbed my eyes and to my astonishment there was a man sitting on each side of my bed. One look was enough—"County Court Warrant Officers," I said to myself—and sure enough they were.

"Good morning, sir," said one of them. "I have several committal orders here against you, amounting in all to £240, and unless you are prepared to pay me that amount I shall have to arrest you."

At that particular moment I had overdrawn my banking account as far as my bankers would allow, and he might just as well have asked me for the

National Debt. My one thought was to gain time. We had then at Parish's a most magnificent head waiter, a dignified and princely person named Thomas. I rang the bell for him, and on his arrival said to him with a wave of my hand toward my captors "Thomas, these two gentlemen will breakfast with me." I shall never forget the horrified and indignant expression on Thomas's face when he looked at my rather dirty and extremely unattractive guests. I gave them a really good breakfast and in the meantime had formulated a plan. There was then in Pall Mall a well-known firm of financial agents named Burr & Co., with whom I had had considerable transactions, and was on very friendly terms. The firm occupied the entire house for their offices, but I remembered that the private room of one of the partners was on the ground floor, and that opening out of his room and covered by a curtain was a small private door leading into King Street, or rather into a yard that adjoined King Street. I determined that this bolt-hole should be the means of my regaining my liberty. After breakfast I informed my guests that the payment of the amount in question was a mere nothing and that all that was necessary was to drive down to my agents and draw the money. Accordingly to Pall



Mal we all went in a cab ; on arriving there we all three entered the office and I entered the private room of the partner already referred to, my captors in the meantime seating themselves on each side of the door, having satisfied themselves (as they thought) that there was no other outlet to the room. I quickly explained the position to my friend, and then lifting the curtain I disappeared.



## CHAPTER X

An Imaginary Supper Party. The Monkey and the Diamonds. A new way of speeding up Cabmen. My Drive from Notting Hill. A smash in Duke Street. The Duke of York's Steps. My Race in Piccadilly.

**I** MUST now refer to one more incident that happened in the course of my stay at Parish's. There was then in London a certain Mr. ———, who came and took a large suite of rooms on the first floor at that hotel; he was only twenty-one years of age and had just inherited a considerable fortune. He had given way to drink, and even when sober was, to say the least of it, a most remarkable person. He had quite recently got married to a very good-looking woman. I came home one evening about eleven o'clock at night, and as I entered the front door, something whizzed past my ear and hit the street

door with a hard rap. I turned round and picked it up, when to my surprise I found that it was a large diamond bracelet, worth I should say a considerable sum of money. Looking up to the top of the stairs I saw Mr. ——— standing on the landing, he being the person who had bombarded me with this novel form of ammunition. It needed only one glance to see that he was “well on.” At that moment Mrs. Parish came up to me in despair and informed me that Mr. ——— had set the whole hotel in an uproar, had offered to fight all the waiters, that he had in fact thrown Thomas out of his room, that he had also insisted on having an elaborate supper prepared for ten people in his sitting room, although there was as a matter of fact no one coming to supper with him at all—would I “go up and put him to bed.” At this moment Mr. ——— came down the stairs and insisted on my going up and joining his purely imaginary supper party. This, for Mrs. Parish’s sake, I agreed to do. On entering his rooms sure enough there was the supper all laid out on an elaborate scale, but not a soul there. Mr. ——— then turned to me and said: “They’re all late, but never mind I will get my wife to join us any way.” I asked him where his wife was. “Oh,” said he,

“she’s in bed.” Whereupon I told him that he had better let her stay there. Before I could stop him he had dashed through the doors leading to his bedroom, into which I of course could not follow him, and whence I heard sounds of a struggle. The next minute he reappeared in the room walking backward dragging after him his wife by her night-dress, which he had pulled over her head, leaving her completely naked. I sprang forward with the intention of putting him on his back and setting her at liberty, when it flashed through my mind that she would not like to remember I had seen her in that condition. I therefore fled for Mrs. Parish, who came, together with one of the chambermaids, and eventually succeeded in setting her free—at the same time locking him out of his wife’s bedroom, but not before he had possessed himself of her dressing bag which contained something like £30,000 worth of jewels. At this point I went to bed, but the sequel was related to me by two eye-witnesses. This young man, having possessed himself of his wife’s diamonds, departed in a cab for Dover Yard, Berkeley Street, Piccadilly, where he had his stables, and where I also had mine. On his arrival he liberated a tame monkey which he kept there in a loose box, fastened his wife’s diamond

necklace, also her pearl necklace, round the animal's neck, and tied her diamond tiara over its head. At this moment the monkey, who was not accustomed to this kind of performance, spotted an open window, and like a flash was gone, diamonds and all, finally taking up a position on one of the stable roofs, where he sat in all his glory, alternately playing with his unaccustomed finery and making faces at his would-be captors, who soon included the police, together with a large crowd of passers-by. After considerable trouble he was caught; the diamonds were rescued and restored to their owner.

I do not know whether this young man is still in the land of the living, but the last news I had of him was what I read in the newspapers. It appears that some time after this he engaged a hansom cab in the West End, I think it was in Charles Street, Haymarket. The driver had not driven him very far when the little trap door in the roof of the cab was pushed open by the barrel of a revolver, and his fare shouted up at him: "Drive faster, you —— fool"—bang—"Why don't you drive faster you —— fool"—bang—two shots in all. The cabman did not wait to argue the point, but jumped off the cab and darted up the Haymarket, where he met a couple of policemen, with whom he returned.



Mr. ——— was disarmed and arrested, being afterwards sent either to prison or a lunatic asylum—I forget which—though undoubtedly the latter was his proper abode.

Talking of hansom cabs reminds me of two incidents that happened to myself, as well as a most remarkable one that I happened to witness.

I was coming one afternoon out of a house in Notting Hill in a great hurry to keep an appointment in Pall Mall, it being a matter of vital importance to me that I should not be late. The only hansom I could see was standing in front of a public house and I did not notice at the time that the driver was not quite sober. I jumped in and told him I was in a hurry and off we went up the Bayswater Road. To my surprise he whipped up his horse till it was going at a gallop, which was not at all what I intended when I said I was in a hurry. At this moment a cart was approaching us and turned to go down a street on the left-hand side of the road, which I think was St. Petersburg Place. Instead of attempting to make way my driver ran straight into it with a crash. Our horse kept his feet and we got free from the cart. To my surprise, instead of pulling up to embark on the usual altercation that takes place on these occasions,

we went flying on up the Bayswater Road, the only difference being that we were now travelling at full gallop, in fact our horse was well stretched out. By this time I was in a towering passion, and poking my stick up through the trap door in the roof, I called the driver every uncomplimentary name that I had ever heard or read of, but he made no reply, upon which I crept forward in front of the cab, and looking over the top I discovered the reason of his silence, namely "that he was not there." I was in reality sitting in a runaway cab without a driver. What had really happened no doubt was that when we collided with the cart he had been bumped off into the road. I managed with difficulty to reach the reins which were hanging loose, and when I had done so I soon stopped the horse. We were now at Lancaster Gate, and I had a burning desire to return and kick the driver. I could not, however, spare the time to return half-a-mile down the road to look for a drunken cabman, for first and foremost I had to keep my appointment at all costs.

The great question was what to do with the cab and horse, when I suddenly remembered the story of the old woman and the unsuspecting stranger, "Would you mind, sir, holding the baby for a

moment?" I saw coming toward me another empty hansom, which I hailed, also a very unsophisticated looking youth—the latter had all the appearance of a likely subject. "Would you mind holding this horse for a moment?" said I. He consented and took hold of the horse's head, handling the reins as though they were red hot poker. "You don't want me to hold him long, do you?" he enquired. "Not particularly," I replied, as I jumped into the other cab and drove off. The last I saw of him was when I looked through the little window at the back of the cab; he was then staring after us with a sort of puzzled look. I never heard what became of my inebriated Jehu, the young man, or the cab and horse, but I kept my appointment.

My second experience was in Duke Street, St. James's, which, as most people are aware, is a rather narrow street, and leads downhill from Jermyn Street into King Street. I was driving down the hill one day in my private cab and had just reached a point about thirty yards from the bottom, when all of a sudden, without a word of warning, my cabman, who was a very fine driver, whipped up my horse for all he was worth, and we dashed down the remaining portion of the hill. I

put my stick up through the trap door at the top and gave him a bit of my mind. "Sit tight, sir, don't move," he shouted, and round the corner we dashed, my horse only just managing to get round without falling. We had scarcely cleared the corner when I heard the most appalling noise behind us, loud shouts, a bang and a crash and sounds of falling glass. It turned out that two cabs had been standing outside a public house at the top of the street, their drivers being inside refreshing themselves. Something had frightened both horses, with the result that both of them ran away together down the hill side by side at full gallop, the two cabs leaving no room for anything else in the street. When they reached the bottom of the hill one of them charged a lamp-post on the left side of the street, knocking it down as if it had been made of paper, the horse being killed instantly; the other runaway dashed across King Street through a large plate-glass window and was so terribly cut about that it had to be destroyed.

The third London cab incident I had no part in myself, but was merely an onlooker, and must confess that I would not have missed seeing it for anything. I was crossing Pall Mall one day at the bottom of Waterloo Place, on my way to call on a



friend of mine in Carlton House Terrace. When I was about forty or fifty yards from the Duke of York's steps which lead down into St. James's Park I heard loud shouts at some little distance behind me. I turned round and saw coming down Waterloo Place a runaway hansom cab, with no driver on the top and nobody inside. The horse might be said to be "all out." He got safely across Pall Mall without running into anything; he then headed straight for the Duke of York's steps, which are thirty in number in addition to two wide landings in between, down which he galloped into the Park without a slip and without putting a foot wrong! I afterwards, together with a policeman, inspected the horse when he had been caught in St. James's Park, and found that he had literally not got a scratch. The policeman remarked to me: "You and I have seen something, sir, that very likely no one else has ever seen before or will ever see again." That the horse had not fallen with the impetus which the cab must have had behind him as it bounded from step to step was extraordinary, and it was a sight that I would not have missed seeing for anything in the world.

A rather amusing incident happened to me one morning about this time. After breakfast I started

off in my cab to drive to the Bachelors' Club, which I was in the habit of doing nearly every morning about that hour of the day. Coming down Hamilton Place, as we were nearing the Club, I noticed a man standing outside who somehow or other did not attract me at all. I distinctly felt that he was an undesirable character, also that for the time being his life was linked with mine. The absent-minded fits to which I have referred in some of the earlier pages of this book had long since left me, and I had on the contrary become a particularly quick thinker. Instantly I pushed my stick up through the trap door, and addressing my cabman said : " Do you see that man outside the Club—I don't like him. Turn to the right down Piccadilly. Go like the devil and lose him." We cleared the Club, got safely into Piccadilly and turned to the right toward Hyde Park Corner. Just then my cabman opened the little trap door in the roof and shouted : " He has seen you, sir, has got another cab and is after us." " Go on," I shouted to him. " Which way shall I go, sir? " he enquired. " I don't care, go where you like," I replied. Straight down St. George's Place we fled at full speed, past the Alexandra Hotel and Wilton Place, with my enemy in full pursuit. The pace was hot, but it

was very fortunate for me that I was in my own cab, for my horse was probably and was generally acknowledged to be the fastest harness horse then in London. There was considerable excitement in the street, the people not being accustomed to that particular form of entertainment in broad daylight. At Albert Gate the police endeavoured without success to hold us up. I then remembered that on the right hand side of Sloane Street there was a narrow turning that led into a labyrinth of stables and narrow streets, all of which were quite familiar to me and which have long since been pulled down in the improvements of the Cadogan Estate. I shouted to my driver "Down Sloane Street, then first to the right, and then I will guide you." We both managed to get round into Sloane Street without falling; then came the narrow turning to the right. In order to get round this I had to pull up nearly into a walk, but fortunately I had, by this time a good hundred yards lead of my pursuer, and we got safely round the corner; then up the narrow street we dashed. Just at that moment a costermonger emerged from another small street on the left-hand side leading a donkey-cart loaded up with cabbages. Pulling up was impossible, and over went the donkey-cart, cabbages and all, on to

the pavement, but I am thankful to say without injuring the donkey or the man. Almost at the same moment I saw a large cart loaded up with straw, the driver of which was starting to back across the narrow lane. "Dodge behind that cart," I shouted to my cabman. He just did it with about six inches to spare, and the driver of the straw cart backed across the road and completely blocked the way. We had defeated the enemy, but I was taking no chances, and never pulled up till I got into Cromwell Road, near the spot where the Natural History Museum now stands. Being hunted down Piccadilly in broad daylight by a Warrant Officer with an order for my arrest for £200 (for so he turned out to be) is purely an acquired taste, but I am bound to confess that I greatly enjoyed the excitement.



## CHAPTER XI

My unknown Estates. "The Family." Joe Aylesford. Packington Hall. My Yacht. My First Marriage. Strange effect of Opium. Mr. Frank Platt. The Island of Samoa. The Family.

I HAVE already mentioned the fact that owing to the extravagance and love of gambling, particularly on the Stock Exchange, of my brother's wife—the then Lady Sebright—his fortune had become considerably impaired, and he was obliged to encumber his life interest to a large extent. Eventually Beechwood was let furnished to a Mr. Greenfield, and it was decided to sell Besford Court, Worcestershire, an estate that had been in our family for many hundreds of years. The sale of this estate gave rise to the following peculiar incident. One morning I received a letter from somebody I did not know

from an address in Worcestershire. The wording of the letter was, to the best of my recollection, something like this :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ If at any time you would like to come down and inspect your estate in this county we shall be very pleased to put you up.

“ Yours truly,

“ \_\_\_\_\_.”

Now I had never at any time owned any estate in Worcestershire ; all the Sebright estates in that county as well as in other counties being strictly entailed upon my brother, Sir John Sebright, who was therefore tenant for life. I came to the conclusion that it was either a mistake or else a practical joke. I did not however tear the letter up, but put it in my pocket and carried it about with me for about three weeks, when having occasion to call and see a certain solicitor who was acting for me at that time as well as for my brother, I laughingly referred to the letter in question. From a peculiar look that came into his eyes as I was talking to him I quickly came to the conclusion that he

had already heard something about it, and that instead of its being a practical joke, there was on the contrary something in it. He asked me to leave the letter with him, which I did, and he said he would make enquiries. To make a long story short, what had really happened was this. At the sale of the Besford Estate by auction it was purchased by Lord Beauchamp, and as is customary in these cases his solicitors had instructed counsel to examine the title, with the result that they advised him not to complete the purchase, as the estate in reality belonged to the youngest son of the late Sir Thomas Sebright, having passed over the head of all the other sons direct to the youngest under the ancient Saxon law of Borough English which applied in that particular parish. As I am the youngest son of the late Sir Thomas Sebright I was the rightful owner of the property and had been ever since my father's death about twenty years before, my brother having been drawing the rent from the estate, which I need hardly say, without his knowledge, had never belonged to him for the whole of that time. I executed the necessary documents, releasing him from his awkward position, and Lord Beauchamp completed the purchase.

Just at that time there was in London a little coterie of intimate friends of both sexes of which I was a member, and who were in the habit of frequently dining together, the dinner being given in turn by one or other of the male members. This little coterie was well known in London as "The Family," and consisted of Lord Aylesford, his two brothers, Dan and Clem Finch, the present Lord Sandys, the late Lord Cairns, Freddy Knollys, Mr. Frank Cobbett and myself. The lady members consisted of Mrs. Percy Cooper, Madame Marini, Connie Gilchrist, Mrs. Julius Benedict, and another lady. I need hardly remark that when we were all dining together we made a fairly large party. Poor Joe Aylesford was a great friend of mine; he was a great big kindly warm-hearted man, the enemy of no one but himself, and eventually he took it into his head that he would like to buy a ranch out in Texas, which he did. He went out there for a time to inspect it and see what life as a cowboy was like. While out there he unfortunately met with an accident and broke his leg; blood poisoning set in, and was eventually the cause of his death. The evening before he left England he gave a dinner at his house in London, I myself



being one of the party. In the course of the evening he asked me to remain behind after all his guests had departed, as he wished to have a talk with me, which I did. He appeared to me to have a kind of presentiment of coming evil. After making me promise to befriend a certain person should the necessity arise during his absence, he then turned to me and said : “ You were always keen on shooting. How would Packington and all the shooting for the season suit you? ” I replied that nothing would suit me better, upon which he there and then gave me a letter to his steward at Packington to that effect. Packington Hall, in Warwickshire, is a very large place, and the shooting is quite first-class. I could not, however, dream of occupying the house, which I could not afford to live in even if I had had the inclination. I therefore, together with Dan and Clem Finch and a Mr. Honeywood, took up my abode at the inn at Bowden, on the outskirts of the Park, and this we made our headquarters for the season, during the whole of which we had the best of sport.

About this time I took it into my head that I should like to possess a yacht, or at all events to hire one. A lady of my acquaintance told me of a

500-ton steam yacht, which was at that time at Hull, and the owner of which was desirous of letting her for some three or four months. So to Hull I went, inspected the yacht, made up my mind to take her for three months, and paid the money. I ordered the yacht to be refitted and to join me at Southampton, at which port she duly arrived. In the meantime certain arrangements I had made respecting the party on the yacht fell through owing to circumstances which it is not necessary here to go into, with the result that I forwarded the necessary payments to the captain of my yacht, returned her to her owner at Hull, and have never seen her from that day to this, which was probably a fine piece of business for her owner, though a most unsatisfactory piece of extravagance on my part.

I must now refer to a certain event in my life that took place about this time, and that may be described as the greatest tragedy of my career, namely, my secret marriage to my first wife, who was a Miss Scott, the daughter of Lena Lady Scott. Lady Scott herself was a very beautiful woman, and I had been her intimate friend since I was a lad of nineteen. She had two daughters, the elder

of whom became my wife, and the younger eventually married Lord Russell, and together with her mother figured largely in various proceedings in the King's Bench, in the Divorce Court, and at the Old Bailey.

My own marriage with Miss Scott was dissolved by the Divorce Court on her petition, the Court granting her a decree of what is known as "Nullity of marriage" on the ground of what is called "duress." I have no intention in these pages of breaking the silence that as a point of honour I imposed upon myself at the hearing of this famous law suit and that I have kept all these years. To a certain extent the reasons for that silence afterwards leaked out and became known more or less to everybody. But there was another reason that has never been known to anybody and never will be. It is sufficient for me to say that although I had a large number of witnesses present in Court and an immense number of most important letters, I refused to allow my leading counsel to call any of the former or to read a single one of the latter. When Mr. Justice Butt granted the decree, which he did after reserving his decision for several days, he made the following remark: "I feel that in this

case there is something which is being kept back from me.”

About a year after this tragedy in my life I got my reward, for I met my present dear wife and married her, and much as I had suffered in the past it was as nothing compared to the happiness that has since been mine. After our marriage my wife and I lived for a considerable time at Parish's Hotel, where she was most dangerously ill, and during her illness, when she was quite out of danger, as she was still suffering from sleeplessness, together with a return of pain, Dr. Duncombe considered it necessary to give her opium. Whether the dose was rather strong or whatever else it was I do not know, but a strange thing happened. I had three friends dining with me that night, Lord Camoys, Sir Matthew Wood, and Mr. Frank Platt. We were dining in the private room of our suite. Out of this room a door opened into a very short passage that led into my wife's bedroom. We were in the middle of dinner when the communicating door was softly opened and my wife in her nightdress glided quietly into the room, her eyes wide open, with a kind of stony stare, her hands extended in front of her as though warding off



some sort of danger; she walked twice round the dining room table muttering to herself the whole of the time, "Yes, yes, I killed him. I shot the fox—I shot the fox—I shot the fox with my grandfather's gun." I signed to my guests to keep still, and rising from the table took her gently by the sleeve, drew her toward the bedroom door and led her to the bed. I then picked her up in my arms and laid her down without waking her up. The following morning she knew nothing whatever about it. I need hardly say that my wife was never guilty of the terrible crime of vulpecide, nor indeed of shooting anything else.

The Mr. Platt I have mentioned as being one of my guests on that occasion was a most extraordinary man; he was an American, universally known as President Platt, although nobody seemed to be quite clear as to what he was President of, which in no way prevented his getting to know a large number of influential people in London, with all of whom he was extremely popular. He was a kind-hearted genial sort of man, very well-informed and a most amusing companion. Some years afterwards I became acquainted with the whole of his history. It appears that together with

a friend of his, who was also an American, he chartered a large steam yacht and went for an extended cruise, eventually landing on the Island of Samoa, which at a later period became so well known as the home of Stevenson. To this Island they both took a violent fancy, not only on account of its natural attractions but also because they thought they saw in it considerable commercial possibilities. They then and there annexed it. Frank Platt declared himself President of this new State, while his companion declared himself Secretary of State, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a few other things. They proceeded to levy taxes on the native population, lived in great style, and had a high old time generally. Somehow or other news of this comic opera state reached the ears of the authorities in England, and a British cruiser was ordered to go round there and look into the matter. One morning the cruiser arrived, and having found out the exact position of affairs, they ordered Platt and his companion to clear out forthwith, which they refused to do. The cruiser eventually fired upon the yacht and sank her, and captured Platt's companion, but Platt himself escaped. Nothing daunted, Mr. Platt then instituted an action against

the British Government, claiming the sum of £300,000 damages for the loss of his island and the yacht.

It was I believe shortly after this that his kindly face and heavy gold-rimmed spectacles beamed for the first time upon London.

## CHAPTER XII

Portman Square. The Ardlamont mystery. Mr. Monson. Extraordinary Case of Mistaken Identity.

**A**FTER a time my wife and I decided to leave Parish's Hotel, and took a furnished house in Upper Berkeley Street for a short time, finally moving thence to a house in Portman Square which we had recently purchased and where we continued to reside for some years. Shortly after we took possession of our new house occurred that extraordinary tragedy known as the Ardlamont mystery, which made such a sensation both in this country and in Scotland. It would be impossible for me to enter extensively into the facts of this extraordinary case; briefly, however, they are as follows. A certain Mr. A. J. Monson, who was an Army crammer in Yorkshire, had among his pupils a lad



named Eric Hambrough, who when he attained his majority would have become entitled to a valuable reversionary interest to considerable property coming to him upon his father's death. Young Hambrough was I believe not on the best of terms with his father, and had been allowed to some extent to run loose. Monson had been extremely kind to him, whether from any ulterior motives or not I am quite unable to say, but the fact remained that he had. Ultimately young Hambrough looked to him for everything. I knew Mr. and Mrs. Monson and also two members of his family, namely, Lord Monson, once British Ambassador in Paris, and "Daddy" Monson, the very popular Secretary of Hurlingham Club. I had also met young Hambrough on one occasion. One day toward the end of July Monson called upon me in London and informed me that he had rented a place in Scotland called Ardlamont for August and September and invited me to shoot with him, informing me at the same time that Eric Hambrough was to be one of the party. I however declined the invitation as I had already made other arrangements. Shortly after this he wrote to me from Scotland about something or other (I do not remember what), to which letter I replied. After this I heard no more

of Monson till one day I received a telegram from him—"Am arrested on a charge of murder. Writing." I duly received a letter from him explaining that he had been charged with the murder of young Eric Hambrough, by shooting him while they were both out shooting together in a wood a few days before. At the trial in Edinburgh, which lasted a week, and at which I was present, a verdict was brought in of "Not proven." I myself have always believed that Monson was innocent. I well remember that about a week after the trial was over I was sitting with my wife after dinner in the library of my house in Portman Square, together with a hospital nurse who had been nursing one of my children. It was a severe winter's night with a heavy snowstorm. We were discussing the case round the fire. The hospital nurse remarked: "I should be frightened to death anyhow if I were to meet that man." At that very moment the front door bell rang; my butler opened the door and in walked Monson. I can see him now with the driving snowstorm behind him, his face drawn, and very pale. He came forward and held out his hand to my wife, saying "I hope that you can take my hand and that you do not believe I am a murderer." As I have already remarked, we all firmly believed

in his innocence and therefore did all we could to reassure him ; he sat before the fire and told us of all he had suffered and that he was leaving England. I have never seen or heard of him from that day to this.

Talking of circumstantial evidence reminds me of a case that shows how extremely dangerous evidence of this kind may be. The story I am about to relate is, I believe, the most remarkable instance of this on record, and was related to me by my friend Mr. Michael Fenton, whose father in his capacity of Crown Prosecutor for the County of Sligo had the conduct of the prosecution. It appears that on a certain date (which I do not remember) a murder was committed in Sligo, and the police had the very best of reasons for suspecting that a man named Tommy White was the murderer. On the night of the murder he disappeared from Sligo. This man had a cast in one eye, and his left arm had a rather prominent tattoo mark. These marks of his identity as well as of his general appearance were of course fully set out in a description that was circulated by the police all over Great Britain and Ireland. Some time elapsed, if my memory is correct—I think it was many months, perhaps more—when a policeman walking in



Liverpool, or in one of its outskirts, saw a man walking toward him who exactly answered to the description of the wanted man. After he had passed him he turned round and followed him, and coming up close beside him, he said "Good evening, Mr. White." The man turned round immediately and admitted that his name was Thomas White, that he came from Sligo, and had left that county shortly after the date on which the murder was committed. He was taken to the Police Station and charged, and it was noticed that he had a cast in his eye and a tattoo mark on his left arm. He was sent to Sligo and formally committed for trial, strongly professing his innocence. It was eventually proved up to the hilt that he was the wrong man! It was also proved that the other Tommy White—the real criminal—had sailed on a certain ship for America, had been seen and had posted two letters out there only two or three days before the innocent Tommy White was arrested in Liverpool.



## CHAPTER XIII

Moneylenders I have known. A woman moneylender. An intricate deal. The ethics of moneylending. A man attempts to shoot me and then impersonates my brother in Australia.

**T**HERE was at this time in London a certain man, a Polish Jew, who settled himself in the West End as a moneylender. I have at various periods of my life had a great deal to do with London moneylenders, but have no hesitation in saying that I have never met the equal in some respects of this particular gentleman. He always began the day with a long spell of prayer, and if you came to his office before a certain hour you would be told, "Hush, Mr.— is praying." Whenever I received this information I knew that the interest would be extra hot. He had in his employment a confidential clerk, who was in his way almost as great a character as

his employer, and who was quite as particular about getting drunk regularly every morning as his master was about his devotions; in fact, when his master wanted him to write a business letter to a client he used, as a matter of course, to send for him to a neighbouring public house. One day a friend of mine, who knew that I had had considerable experience of the little ways of moneylenders, asked me to call on Mr.—— who was threatening proceedings against him. I promised my friend that I would be his ambassador, and accordingly on the following morning presented myself at Mr.——'s office, and I must say I found him fairly amenable to reason, and was just coming to a satisfactory arrangement about my friend's affairs when I heard a heavy and uncertain step stumbling up the staircase, the door of Mr.——'s private room was violently thrown open and in lurched the confidential clerk, who was most confidentially drunk—in fact, more so than usual. Mr.—— regarded his intoxicated employé with a look of pained surprise as though this was altogether some new phase which he had never encountered before. “Vy, Mr.—— you are drunk!” he exclaimed (as if that worthy had ever been anything else), upon which his clerk lurched toward him, first chucked him under the

chin and then proceeded to kiss him on both cheeks. This was too much for Mr.—. The little man felt that his reputation was at stake. He first seized a large London Directory, which he hurled at the head of his confidential clerk, and then seizing his own brand new top hat which he had purchased the day before, he placed it on the floor and jumped on it, though how on earth this would punish anybody but himself I never could make out. Possibly it was some sort of secret sign between them of the breaking off of all diplomatic relations ; if so, it had its effect, for his clerk at this point had seated himself at his master's writing table, in his master's best chair, his head resting on his hands, and with his voice choked with sobs he was singing, "Little Darling come and kiss me, kiss me once before I die." There was a pause, and then up got the clerk and once more folded Mr.— to his bosom weeping copious tears on his shoulder. All this was not conducive to business and a terrible thought flashed through my mind that he might possibly take it into his head to kiss me, as well as his master. I fled, but when I got safely down into the street I was so convulsed with laughter that I was nearly hysterical.

This confidential clerk had a wife who was

possessed of the same weakness and the same fondness for the bottle as her husband. One morning he remarked to me to my great surprise, "Ah, Mary just loves you. She's just longing to meet you." I remarked that I had never yet had the pleasure of the lady's acquaintance. Some three weeks afterwards when I was standing in the hall of the Berkeley Hotel where I happened to be staying at the moment, it being then about lunch time and the hall full of people, who should lurch through the entrance door but the confidential clerk, who approaching me exclaimed in excited tones, "Mary is outside, and is coming in to see you." He was himself in his usual condition. I looked quickly through the door of the hotel into the street, and there beheld Mary. She was leaning against the wall of Devonshire House staring blankly at the hotel, her bonnet was cocked on one side and she was in precisely the same condition as her husband. I made one dash for the lavatory of the hotel and having arrived there shut myself in until a friendly porter came to me and informed me that the coast was clear.

Talking of moneylenders and money lending reminds me that I have something to say on the subject generally. So far as the professional



moneylenders themselves are concerned I have no hesitation in saying that some of them are the most unmitigated scoundrels. On the other hand, there are others who are perfectly straightforward fair-dealing men, who treat their clients very well so long as their clients treat them in the same way. I am, however, now not speaking so much about the personal character and methods of the individual moneylenders as I am about money-lending in the abstract. I am prepared to argue that money-lending is quite as respectable a business, provided it is conducted in a respectable way, as any other business in the world. There are two sides to a contract. Money is a marketable commodity, and is worth exactly whatever it will fetch, precisely the same as any other commodity. It is, moreover, the commodity, the possession of which enables people to convey to themselves all other commodities. Why then attempt to place a limit on the price of one commodity (and that the most important) and ignore entirely the huge profits which are made on most of the others? Why call the West End tradespeople, who frequently sell their goods at a profit of from 100 to 300 per cent., sometimes on credit but frequently for actual cash down, respectable tradespeople, and in the same breath call the

money merchant, who as a rule sells his goods at the average profit of from 60 to 80 per cent., and who always has to give credit, “a damned money-lender?” Why call the respectable old-established banker, who takes a gilt edged security and lends at five or six per cent. without any risk whatever, “a most respectable person,” and call the money-lender, who in ninety-five cases out of a hundred takes no security whatever, runs a great risk, frequently loses the whole of his money and charges 60 per cent., “a scoundrel?” The banker is himself a moneylender and nothing else. The whole principle of banking is that you get the money of Smith sometimes for nothing, but at all events for a very low rate of interest, and lend it to Jones at a higher rate. Goodness knows I hold no brief for the moneylenders. I have borrowed from them in my time tens of thousands, mostly at high rates, but that was my lookout if I chose to do so, and I don’t go about and call them all scoundrels because they got for their goods from me the best price that they could. That kind of argument is neither logical nor just, but is due to prejudice which the money-lenders have in many cases brought upon themselves by their abominable way of doing business. There is a very true French saying, “*Les affaires*

c'est l'argent des autres," and it proves its truth in all the business circles of the globe.

Talking of moneylenders reminds me that I was on very intimate terms with the famous Sam Lewis. Mr. Lewis had begun life, I believe, in the cigar trade, and ultimately took up the business of money lending. He was a most straightforward man in all his dealings, and I have known a large number of cases in which he acted with the utmost generosity. On a certain occasion I called upon him on behalf of a friend of mine in order that I might make arrangements to pay him off the amount of his claim, which was at that time £36,000. In the course of conversation he remarked to me, "Poor old —— I hear that this is the last shot in the locker, and that he has run through all his money." I remarked that this was true, upon which he said, "Well, knock £6,000 off my account—he has paid me a great deal of money, and you can give that back to him with my love." I knew Sam Lewis intimately, both in his official capacity at Cork Street, and in private life at his house in Grosvenor Square. I have never on any occasion in my life heard any man make any statement whatever against his honourable and straightforward methods of business.



I was at one time acquainted with a lady moneylender ; she was the wife of a London solicitor and a most eccentric woman. She lived in the suburbs and employed a commissionaire to act as sentry at her house, and to walk round and round her garden during the night with a loaded rifle, while upon a tree close to her garden gate a large notice was nailed up to this effect, " All burglars found on these premises will be shot dead. By Order," with her signature below. I very much doubt whether the business of moneylending is half as profitable in these days as it was in the days when Sam Lewis amassed the huge fortune that he left behind him on his death. There is, however, one moneylender who started business originally in Surbiton, where a client of his, in order to mark his sense of gratitude for the way in which this man had treated him, fired two shots at him and wounded him, though I believe not severely. This money merchant eventually came to London and started business in the West End, where he amassed a very considerable fortune. I have never heard it stated that he was other than straightforward in his transactions, although his sordid meanness in money matters, in his private life, is almost a household word. I believe that at least 90 per cent. of the



moneylenders are Jews ; it may, however, surprise my readers to hear that I once knew a Gentile moneylender who surpassed even the member of the fraternity with the drunken clerk to whom I have already referred. This man was a solicitor, although how he escaped being struck off the rolls, as he deserved at least fifty times, was little short of a miracle. He lived on the top floor of an old house in a narrow street off St. Paul's Churchyard. In appearance he was short, grey-haired, with a grey fringe of whiskers which met under his chin, always wore a white bow tie, had watery pale blue eyes with large gold spectacles, and a kind gentle beaming smile. He looked just the kind of fatherly old gentleman that a good many people would like to leave as the guardian and protector of their children. He was as a matter of fact the most rapacious ruffian and the most unmitigated scoundrel that ever walked, concerning whose iniquities I could write a book. I shall never forget my last interview with this worthy member of the legal profession. I had borrowed some money from him for a month at a rate of interest which was so enormous that I did not waste time trying to calculate it. The bill was only two days overdue but I called to tell him that my solicitors would

pay him off in a week's time (which they did). He was in a violent rage at the money not being immediately forthcoming; he got more and more furious, he raged and shrieked till at last I was certain in my mind that I was in the presence of a maniac—the old house fairly echoed with the worthy old gentleman's screams. His chest heaved, and he began clutching at his own throat with his hands; he then had a fit and fell into the fire. I rushed toward him, pulled him out and laid him on the floor of his office, where he lay to all appearance dead. It suddenly flashed through my mind, "This man is a moneylender—you owe him money, you come to see him in this lonely old house and then he is found dead." For the moment I was really scared. I rushed down several flights of stairs to the basement, where I found the housekeeper. I told her that Mr.— had been taken ill, that she must go up to him immediately and at the same time send for a doctor. Mr.—, however, was not dead—unfortunately for a good many people who afterwards got into his clutches. This particular locality was rather unlucky for me as about a hundred yards from that spot, in fact at the corner of the next street, and not more than a year after that date, a man endeavoured to shoot

me, and as he had already been tried for murder and had done seven years for manslaughter, there is very little doubt that he would have done so had I not suddenly back-heeled him and brought him down heavily on the pavement before he could accomplish his purpose. Strangely enough this same man some years afterwards went out to Australia and there represented himself as Captain Edgar Sebright, A.D.C. to Lord Hope-toun (who was my brother), and got credit at hotels, etc.

I must now leave the moneylending fraternity and return to my own life at the point where I broke off, namely when I was living with my wife and children in Portman Square.

## CHAPTER XIV

My First Experience of a Racecourse. My house-party for Ascot. My Racing Stable at Letcombe. Mr. Lofler.

**M**Y first experience of a racecourse, which occurred when I was about seventeen or eighteen, was more instructive than agreeable. I made up my mind to visit Lewes races, which I did. Almost immediately after passing through the pay gate I was accosted by a very agreeable man, who said "Good morning, Captain." This novel way of addressing me distinctly flattered my vanity, for I was always very pleased in those days (though I am not now) at being taken for an older man than I really was. He got into conversation with me and discussed racing in general, informing me at the same time that he was a brother of Fred Archer, the famous



jockey. He then told me that in consequence of his relationship to that great horseman he was in a position from time to time to supply his friends with such valuable information regarding the various horses his brother rode that it was quite easy for himself and his friends to amass a considerable fortune practically without risk. He quite impressed me with the truth of his story, and as he told me that his brother was riding in the first race (which was true) and that nothing short of an earthquake could prevent him from winning it, I entrusted him with a sum of £10 in order that he might back this particular animal on my behalf. There was no earthquake, but nevertheless brother Fred's mount did not win, in fact to the best of my recollection he was down the course. Immediately after the race the tout approached me with a cheery beaming face, informing me that it did not matter, as his brother Fred had just told him that he was riding in the next race another horse which simply could not lose, even if there were two earthquakes! I accordingly handed to him a further sum of £10, which was all the money I had in my possession. The result of that race was the same as the first. He suggested, however, that I had better have a bit of a gamble on the third race and get all my

money back, stating that as I had no more money with me if I would give him my name and address he would trust to my honour and would put the money on for me himself out of his own pocket. This I thought was a fine generous action on his part. I accordingly agreed to his suggestion. This horse, however, was no less unfortunate than the other two, although it was not ridden by brother Fred. Fortunately, on the following morning, before I had had time to send him the £20 which he had pretended to put on the third runner (but which of course he really never did), I happened to mention my adventure to a man I knew who had experience of Turf matters, and who informed me that the man was a swindler, as Fred Archer had only one brother, namely Charles Archer, a trainer at Newmarket. My agreeable friend wrote to me once or twice requesting payment of the money. I did not reply to his first communication, but at last I wrote to him refusing to pay and informing him of my discovery.

I did not for a long time after that have any connection whatever with racecourses, but a few years later I took a house for Ascot week. My house-party on that occasion consisted of Mrs. Luke Wheeler, Miss Glynn, daughter of Admiral Glynn,

Colonel Trotter, Mr. Herbert Praed, Mr. and Mrs. Molesworth, Clarence Sinclair, and Sir Robert Abercrombie. The weather had been extraordinarily wet and all the roads leading to and from the course were very deep and badly cut up by the traffic. After the last day's racing the going on the journey home was so bad that in order to lighten the coach and make it easier for the horses, the two grooms and all the men of our party, with the exception of Colonel Trotter, who was driving, got off the coach and walked for some little distance on the footpath at the side of the road. Very shortly after we had begun to do so two racecourse roughs, who were driving a fast trotting pony in a two-wheeled cart, came up from behind us, drove up on to the footpath, deliberately knocked over our two grooms, and without a word of apology but much filthy language, started to drive on. Clarence Sinclair shouted out to me to stop them. I accordingly seized their pony by the reins and backed them into the ditch. They then got out and began to show fight. Clarence Sinclair was a very strong man, a very good fighter, and very game. Poor little Abercrombie was also game enough for anything, but not physically able to take part in a rough and tumble fight of this



description. He was a little man of more or less frail physique, and had been from an early age almost entirely bald. He rushed, however, without hesitation into the thickest of the fray and fought like a tiger. We made it at last so hot for the enemy that they bolted in the direction of a neighbouring public house, which to the best of my recollection was called the Crispin, or some similar name. After them we went, but there found the situation much worse for us, as they were joined by three or four more of the same kind of racecourse ruffians who were drinking there at the time. Before we knew where we were, we were in the midst of one of the toughest fights I have ever known, and I can see to this day poor little Abercrombie's head smothered in blood. Suddenly Clarence Sinclair shouted to me "My watch is gone." I may mention that this particular watch was a very valuable gold repeater which had been presented to him on his coming of age by his father, Sir Tollemache Sinclair, and which he prized very highly. I thereupon jumped upon a table, the fight having now practically subsided, and shouted out "My friend's watch has gone. He will give £20 for it back again and no questions asked." A few moments later I was approached by an un-



savoury looking ruffian who informed me that he thought he knew a man who knew a man who knew something about it. To come to the point, however, the watch was produced. We returned to the coach, where the ladies were still sitting frightened out of their lives, and resumed our journey.

I had always been passionately fond of country life, and especially so where it was associated with horses, of which I had by this time acquired an expert knowledge. I decided to sell our house in Portman Square and take a training establishment in Berkshire. I finally took a lease of the old Manor House, Letcombe Bassett, near Wantage. The house itself was quite small, although beautifully situated, and the Downs were good. I built a lot of very good stabling, besides improving the house and gardens. I also did a great deal of work on the Downs by laying out and improving existing gallops. By the time I had finished with it it was a very good training establishment and included a good sporting shoot. Letcombe Bassett, or Upper Letcombe as it is sometimes called, is about four or five miles from Wantage Road Station, and is in the heart of a great centre of training; there are training establishments at Let-

combe Regis, and at Lambourne only four miles away. I shall always look upon the time I spent at Letcombe as perhaps the happiest period of my existence. Living in the heart of the Down country, up at a very early hour in the morning, riding with a good horse under you along the high ridges of those glorious downs, where the turf is always and in all circumstances like velvet, and the little blue flowers peep through the old virgin turf still sparkling with dew, you sniff the subtle and indescribable smell of nature and of earth that exists only in the early morning, as if the creation was offering up some humble incense to its Maker ; your whole being is in tune, and you say to yourself “ At last I live.” Half the world is asleep, man has not yet woke up to begin his day of cruelty, selfishness and ingratitude, and you feel as though you dreaded that even the soft footfall of your horse on the velvet turf might break the spell.

As I had got my establishment in order, the next thing to do was to fill the loose boxes. I could not afford to keep a racing establishment for my own amusement ; I was there to carry on a business, with congenial and happy surroundings, but a business nevertheless. I was there to win races, and to make racing pay (and I did). I decided to engage

a private trainer to act under my supervision, whom I could always trust to do the right thing in my absence. There happened to be at that time at Letcombe a well-known jockey, H. Luke, who had come down there for a couple of days to see Mr. Robson, the trainer, who also trained there. I met Luke and eventually engaged him. He had been one of the leading jockeys and was a contemporary of Archer, Wood, Goater, Osborn, Constable, Tom Cannon, etc. He won at one time or another many of the great races; he was careful, capable and painstaking with his horses, and nobody knew better how to get a horse fit; he was also a most useful man to have on the spot and put up from time to time to ride in trials.

I now went down to a place called Llanyamonick, near Oswestry, to visit a breeder of bloodstock near there and see what I could pick up, and there I found two horses which I thought would suit me to make a start with. One was Oswestry, and the other was Ivan the Great. The former was at that time a great big three-year-old, who had never been trained, and had only recently been broken in. Ivan the Great was a very good-looking unbroken two-year-old, who, when I first saw him, was running with a flock of sheep. He was



by Shotisham out of Nana, Shotisham being by Hermit. Oswestry I leased and Ivan the Great I bought. Oswestry was always a moderate horse and my great trouble with him was that as he was a leased horse I had no power to run him in selling races, whereas a mile selling race was his particular job. On the other hand his owner had such an inflated idea of his value that it was no use trying to buy him for that purpose. Ivan the Great was a picture of a horse to look at; he also possessed a very fine turn of speed, but could not, except on a very easy course, quite stay the five furlongs. He would slaughter his field at four furlongs and look as if the race were at his mercy, and then die away in the last few strides, and whether you made the running with him or not, the result was generally much the same. I sold him before he had been broken to Sir William Ingram, whose horses I had in my stable, for exactly what I gave for him, and he named him after his famous greyhound who had won the Waterloo Cup. He was a very nice good mannered horse to ride, but he had one peculiarity, namely, that when on the Downs at exercise, if he heard the sound of a flock of sheep bleating in the distance, he would get into a state of wild excitement and break out into a sweat. I had also in



my stable horses belonging to Mr. John Forbes, Sir Ralph Littler, and Mr. Nock, in addition to my own. I had a very nice little horse in my stable called King George the Third, which I bought from Mr. Robson. He was by Radius, could stay well, and afterwards won a long distance race at Lewes. I also had a very nice two-year-old called Dilston. She was by Otterburn and I bought her as a yearling at Cobham's Sale for twenty-five guineas. She was very small, so small that my wife and the late Major Dalbiac (the Treasure) both chaffed me at the ringside for buying her, the "Treasure" asking me whether I wanted her to draw a perambulator. She was however beautifully put together and could go like greased lightning and stay every yard of the five furlongs. Her feet were unusually small even for her size and she was at her best when the ground was as hard as iron. I engineered a most successful coup with her; the season had been very dry and most of the race-courses were terribly hard. I found a selling race that I thought would exactly suit her at Leicester. I put up young Harry Luke, junior, who was then living at Letcombe with his father and riding regularly for my stable. He was a very good boy and could ride a first-class race. I told him to make no

fancy finishes but to come right away and win. There were twenty-one runners in the race; my mare cut them all up from the start. She came home alone, winning the race by fifteen lengths, with the rest of the field down the course at various stages. She fetched £600 or £700—I forget which—after the race. She started at a long price and I won a lot of money.

I also owned another horse called Harry Monmouth; he was by King Monmouth, and I bought him at Leicester after he had won a selling race on the same day as I won with Dilston. He was the property of Mr. Smith, of the “Sportsman,” who was then giving up racing. He had won his race in good style, and I had noticed that he was nothing like as fit as he could be made. I accordingly bought him for £225—and a great bargain he turned out to be. He was a rare stamp of horse, in fact just the kind of animal that we want to encourage on the English Turf. I soon found out that I had made no mistake, for he improved almost daily. I picked out a race for him at Lingfield (which I think was called the Eden Valley Handicap) and decided to put young Luke up as usual. A week before the race I tried him on Wooley Down. I forget now which horses were

in the trial, but I remember that Oswestry was one of them, and I think there were three others. I put Luke Senior on Harry Monmouth, who had to give a lot of weight away all round, and he won by two lengths. The five furlong trial ground on Wooley Down is unusually severe, and the moment they pulled up Harry Monmouth began to buck and kick, so much so that he nearly got rid of Luke—in fact he had no appearance of being a horse that had just run a severe trial up a severe course. This was too good a tip to be lost and I made up my mind to go out for a coup. On the morning of the race they made some horse that Morny Cannon was riding a hot favourite, and my horse opened at ten to one. He won the race in a canter and I bought him in for six hundred and fifty guineas on behalf of Lord de L'Isle.

Shortly after this I went down to spend the day with old Ben Ellam, at The Warren, Epsom, to see his stud. The Warren is an interesting old place and was at one time a hunting box of Charles I. I purchased from him that day three remarkably good-looking yearlings, all of which turned out well, and all three were winners in the able hands of young Harry Luke. Naturally in so important a racing centre as this there were many

really good horses, and among others that great horse and popular idol Victor Wild, whom I used to pass almost every day on the Downs. You could always distinguish him in the distance when walking, as he “dished” to an extent which I have seldom seen equalled. He was trained by John Hornsby at Letcombe Regis. The whole time I was at Letcombe I never had a “savage” or even a bad-tempered horse in the stable. Lynham, however, who trained at Letcombe Regis, had one, a horse called Ingebright, which belonged to Mr. Max Lebaudy. He was a high-class horse, but after a certain time he became a “savage.” One day on the Downs, when pulling up after a gallop, his jockey having dismounted, Ingebright seized him by the shoulder, shook him like a rat and severely mauled him. His trainer Lynham told me rather an interesting story in connection with this horse and Mr. Lofler, the famous horse dentist.

Mr. Lofler was a German American from the States, and lived I believe for many years in Texas. He came over to this country and built up a considerable practice as a horse dentist, possessing as he did a mysterious power over horses which was most remarkable and which in some cases had almost an appearance of mesmerism. Mr. Lynham



told me the following story. Mr. Lofler came down to Letcombe Regis to attend to the teeth of the horses in his stable, and while he was walking round the yard showing Mr. Lofler the horses they came to the box that was occupied by Ingebright. Opening the upper part of the door of the box Mr. Lynham remarked to Mr. Lofler: "This is a dangerous and savage horse and you must attend to his teeth at your own risk." Mr. Lofler replied that he was quite willing to do so. At this point Mr. Lynham left him for a minute in order to give orders to one of the lads to bring a bucket of water to Ingebright's box for Mr. Lofler's use. He then returned to Mr. Lofler to see whether there was anything further that he required. On looking over the lower half of the box door the following strange sight met his gaze—Mr. Lofler, with his coat and waistcoat off and his shirt-sleeves rolled up, was lying on his side in the middle of the box resting himself on one elbow, while with the other hand he was pointing at Ingebright and telling him to turn round now to the right and then to the left, while the horse was dutifully walking round and round the box, but never dreaming of molesting Mr. Lofler in any way.

One day when I was lunching with him at his

place, The Warren, Epsom, Mr. Ben Ellam told me another story of Lofler. Mr. Ellam's paddocks where he kept his brood mares and foals are plainly discernible from the windows on that side of the house, as the house stands on a hill that slopes downward to the paddocks. One day Mr. and Mrs. Ellam had just finished luncheon and were standing in one of the windows of the dining room when they saw that the brood mares in the paddocks were in rather an excited state. Mr. Ellam walked down the hill to try and discover the cause. He then saw a big man on a small pony riding along at a footpace through one of his paddocks and followed by a loose horse which was walking beside him. The horseman turned out to be Lofler and the loose horse to be a notorious savage whose teeth he had been tending somewhere in Epsom and whom he had afterwards induced to follow him about in this manner.

Although I never had a savage in my racing stable at Letcombe, oddly enough I did have one among my hunters at Rugby. Before he came into my possession he had killed a man; having first seized him with his teeth he got him down and knelt on him, and then bit and mauled the top of his head so badly that he died shortly afterwards.

When he was fed or anything else was done for him there were always two of my men present, one of them having a pitchfork in his hand in case of emergency. He once seized my second horseman by the seat of his breeches, and after shaking him flung him on a dunghill. He was a most marvellous hunter, more especially at timber, and was in some respects the best hunter I ever rode in my life. I had trouble with him only on one occasion, and that was on my return from a day with the Pytchley. It was a very windy day and my men were in the saddle room with the door shut and did not hear me ride into the yard. I rode up to the door of the box belonging to this particular horse, jumped off and led him in; feeling a bit stiff at the moment I leant against the manger for a few seconds and stretched myself. At this moment my horse walked toward the open door of the box, and then turning round, stood there with his quarters in the doorway and his head turned toward me with his ears back quite flat. He had a wicked look in his eyes and I guessed what was coming; he came at me with his mouth open, but I side-stepped him, he then reared up on end and came at me again, trying to strike me with his fore legs. I used at that particular time to carry out hunting what is

known as a "hammer handled" hunting whip; as he came charging at me again I brought this down with terrific force on the white star in the centre of his forehead. He came down on his nose and knees, and seizing my opportunity I retreated at the double. He recovered himself and followed me into the yard; my men, however, had heard the commotion, and arming themselves with a pitchfork they drove him into his box. This had been rather an eventful day for me, as that morning I had ridden as first horse a great big chestnut horse called "Lutterworth," which I had bought from a sporting farmer named Law, who lived near Rugby; he was 16.2 in height, a tremendous jumper, but had not much experience as a hunter. We were moving off to draw a neighbouring covert while the whole of the Pytchley field, numbering some hundreds of both sexes, were riding slowly along a very dirty lane. Thinking that I would cut off a corner and get to the head of the crowd, I trotted across the field and jumped the little fence into the lane. The fence was so small that a donkey could have jumped it, and I sat carelessly on my horse without thinking about it; he however took it into his head to jump it as if it were a six-foot wall, with the result that before I knew what had



happened I found myself lying on my back in the middle of a huge pool of stagnant mud about twenty yards in front of the whole of the field, a position that was most undignified. I am now however getting off the track and must return to Letcombe Bassett and my racing stable.

Fond as I always was of hunting and flat racing I never cared a rap about steeplechasing, in fact it always bored me, and the more I have seen of racing the more cordially I dislike that particular branch of it. From the day of my arrival at Letcombe I made up my mind that nothing would induce me to train any steeplechase horses. I did, however, buy a very nice horse called "Down Quilt," for the purpose of leading my two-year-olds in their work. He was a brown gelding with a wall eye, a good jumper, and could stay well. In the winter Sir William Ingram, who was then at Torquay, told me that he would like to win the Ladies Plate at the local steeplechases. I accordingly sold him "Down Quilt," and won for him the race, for which that horse started favourite. I did not attend the meeting myself, but sent Luke with the horse.

In addition to the horses that I have already mentioned I also had "Sokal," "Warren Pet,"

and "Sevastopol," all good winners, and all bred by Mr. Ben Ellam at 'The Warren.

I had spent a lot of money in one way or another in my various improvements at Letcombe, and had made with various horses a good deal of money on the turf. One day, however, when I was away from home at Newmarket, a man, who turned out to be a solicitor's clerk, walked into the stable yard, and addressing Luke, who was standing there, remarked : " Mr. Sebright has made a nice place of this and must have laid out a lot of money here." To make a long story short he then proceeded to inform Luke that my landlord had mortgaged the whole of the estate up to the hilt with a first, second and third mortgage, that he had no power to grant me a lease, and that consequently my lease was invalid. I found myself in this position, that I had either to buy the property with a pistol at my head at an exorbitant price named by the mortgagees, or go, and I chose to go.

I have referred to the fact that I had a very good sporting shoot at Letcombe. In addition to this I hired some shooting about five miles away, and one day when I had invited the local parson to shoot with me, we drove in an open carriage and pair of horses to the place. After our day's sport, while

driving home with the parson, one other friend, myself and three dogs in the carriage, we had just arrived at a turn in the road not far from Letcombe Regis, when suddenly the road beneath the carriage gave way, whether from some hidden drain or whether from the action of the heavy rains with which we had been troubled for some time previously, I do not know, but nevertheless the road subsided, the carriage sank into a deep hole, and almost immediately divided in the middle. We all clambered out without injury and finished our journey on foot. The parson left his gun for the evening in my charge. The following morning was Sunday, and shortly after breakfast, noticing that my gun had been placed in the corner of my Library I thought I would clean it myself. Having done this I turned my attention to the parson's gun, which to my horror I discovered was loaded in both barrels and at full cock. As he had put this gun into the carriage in which we had travelled from the spot where we had been shooting, as it had been in the carriage at the time of our accident, as it had then been thrown out on to the bank, and then lifted out by my servant and placed in the Library on my return home, it is little short of a miracle that some terrible accident had not

occurred. I was very angry with my friend the parson when I remembered what might have happened to one of my children or my servants.

One of the great troubles of racing stables is the touts, some of whom are outside the stable, and some of them inside. On the whole I think that the touts in your stable are much the worse of the two, as they have greater opportunities and are more difficult to detect. Rather a funny thing happened to me one day. I had had, on the Downs in the morning, a trial of some of my horses, and later in the day I had occasion to go to the Post Office at Letcombe Regis, which was about a mile from my place. I was about to write a telegram at the desk, when on picking up the packet of telegraph forms I noticed that the upper form was deeply indented with the impression of a telegram that had evidently been recently sent, and in consequence no doubt of the fact that the pencil was hard and that the writer had written somewhat heavily, a full impression of the telegram had been left upon the form underneath. I discovered that the telegram, which I read, had been sent by one of the lads in my stable to his father, who was a small bookmaker in London, giving a full account of the result of that morning's trial. I tore the form off, and hav-



ing folded it up I placed it in my pocket and returned home. On my arrival I sent for the lad and asked him whether he had been in Letcombe Regis that day. He replied that he had not. I then asked him if he had been to the Post Office, and he said No. I then asked him why he had sent to his father that day the result of my trial, whereupon his face was a study, as he very naturally could not imagine how I came to know anything whatever about it. He afterwards confessed to me that my accusation was true, as he could not in the circumstances very well help doing. I, of course, discharged him.

## CHAPTER XV

Jockeys I have known.

**I** HAVE known very well two or three of the famous jockeys on the turf, but with one of them in particular I was very intimate for some time, namely George Barratt, who was the contemporary of C. Wood, the brothers Loates, etc. I was present at Kempton Park when he rode the last winner and (I think) the last horse he ever rode. The animal in question was called Beau Brocade; it started at four to one and won by about ten lengths, and was, if my memory has not deceived me, the property of M. Ralli. George Barratt called me aside just before he mounted the horse and said to me "There is no possible chance of my being beaten in this race, go and back him at once." I immediately returned to

the members' enclosure, and walking up to the rails I took £800 to £200 from Mr. R. H. Fry. I then returned to the paddock for something or other when a man who was a stranger to me approached me and said "Excuse me, sir, although I am a stranger to you I hear that you are very well informed about Mr. Barratt's mounts, and I shall be so thankful if you would tell me whether he will win this race." As every man knows who has any real racing experience this kind of request is by no means uncommon and has to be guarded against. I looked at the man and saw in his eyes a look of feverish anxiety. He told me that owing to his own ill-health, and that of his wife, he had lost his job, and that in three or four days he would also lose his home. I knew that by this time all the "stable money" was on, so I asked him how much money he had on him and he told me that he had £18. I told him to go to the small outer ring and put £13 of it on Beau Brocade, and told him to hurry as the horses were nearly all at the post. After the race he came up to me with tears in his eyes and told me that he had got six to one in the outer ring, and had won £78, which would save his home and give him enough to keep his family on, till he got into another job. He did not wait

a second for any more racing, but made tracks for the station and home. George Barratt, although he won, rode his race madly from the start, like a man who was riding for a desperate finish, whereas in reality there was never, from the fall of the flag, anything in it except Beau Brocade. I have always felt certain from his own demeanour, as well as from subsequent events, that his brain was seriously affected when he rode that day the winner of that race at Kempton Park. A very few days after this I heard from Mrs. Barratt that her husband was very ill, and latterly as I was going to Newmarket to attend the July sales, I thought I would call at their house and enquire how he was. I was however not allowed to see him, and as I walked up the street the last thing I heard was poor Barratt's screams as he lay held down in bed by two nurses.

Whenever he slept in London George Barratt was in the habit of staying at Brown's Hotel, Albemarle Street, and on two or three occasions I dined with him there. One evening after dinner he told me the true history of his life, and I will repeat the story exactly as I received it from his own lips. It appears that his parents, who were people of more or less humble position, had had great financial



troubles, and at last found themselves very poor. Feeling that he could not continue to be a burden to them, George ran away from home, being then I believe about twelve years of age. He got to London and wandered about endeavouring to find employment of some sort and doing any little odd jobs that he could find here and there. At last things became desperate with him, and the boy found himself one winter's night in Covent Garden Market with no home and no money. He happened to find a large empty barrel with some old sacks in it. Into this he crawled, and drawing the sacks over him as best he could he curled himself up and fell asleep. How he managed about breakfast in the morning I do not know, but if he got any at all I am afraid it was not quite up to the form of Brown's Hotel, Albemarle Street. That day he decided to go to Euston Station and try to earn a few shillings by getting cabs for people, etc. Late that night he saw a hansom cab driving out of the station with some luggage on the top; he determined to climb on to the step at the back and hang on till the fare inside had reached his destination, and then offer to lend a hand with the luggage. The driver of the cab became after a while aware that there was a boy hanging on behind, and look-

ing down at him called out to him to get off. What was the boy's astonishment when he found that the face peering down at him from above was the face of his own father! "Don't you know me, Dad?" said he. When the hansom had reached its destination and the fare had paid him off, Barratt's father placed his boy inside, and drove him home to the stables. The next day it was decided that he should go to Newmarket and try to get employment at one of the racing stables there, which he did, and succeeded in becoming apprenticed to one of the leading trainers, though for the moment I have forgotten which. This little boy eventually became the great fashionable jockey, sought after by the millionaires of the English Turf, and left when he died, to the best of my recollection, a fortune of sixty or seventy thousand pounds. I think all my readers will agree with me that the facts I have just related are greatly to the little man's credit and that he was justly entitled to be proud of them. If it were not so I should not have inserted them in this book. I have no hesitation in saying that the worst race I ever saw this great little horseman ride was when he won at Kempton on Beau Brocade, and the finest race I ever saw him ride, or in fact

any other jockey, was when he won the Manchester Cup on Lord Edward Somerset's Carlton, beating Mr. Baird's Quilp by the shortest of short heads.

## CHAPTER XVI

Evelyn Gardens. Death of my Nephew, Sir Egbert Sebright. Devizes Castle. Brighton. Fred Barrett. Berlin. Baron and Baroness James Bleichroder.

**W**HEN we left Letcombe we came to London once more and I took a house at Evelyn Gardens, South Kensington, where we remained for eighteen months. At this time my brother Edgar was in Australia, where he was first of all A.D.C. to Lord Hopetoun, and afterwards private secretary to Lord Kintore. Shortly after our arrival at Evelyn Gardens he became ill and eventually resigned his post on Lord Kintore's staff, returned to England, and came to live with us, remaining with us for a year. My nephew, Sir Egbert Sebright, had now come of age and was travelling in Java, where he was taken ill and died. My



brother Edgar now succeeded to the title and estates and finally took up his residence at Beechwood where we used to visit him from time to time. I soon made up my mind that in no circumstances would I live any longer in London, as it bored me to extinction, so after the birth at Evelyn Gardens of my youngest boy, I left London once more having taken a lease of Devizes Castle, Wiltshire.

Devizes Castle, which is one of the old Royal Castles of England and was besieged by Cromwell, is a beautiful and historical place with extensive walks and terrace gardens surrounding the Castle, which although they are beautiful are also extremely expensive to keep up. There is also a very fine view from many of the windows and a still finer one from the top of the flag tower. There is in the Castle a museum of various weapons and instruments of torture, which were found in the dungeons and grounds, and always greatly interested my guests. My life there was quite uneventful. I had two or three horses in training some two or three miles across the Downs, and spent most of my time in riding with my wife and daughter, with occasional visits to Beckhampton, Laycock Abbey, Savernake Forest and other places

in the summer, and hunting in the winter. After we had been living at Devizes for about two years we came to the conclusion that the expense of upkeep was too great and decided to give it up. I have never been quite able to make up my mind whether I was sorry or not to leave this beautiful old place. My wife and children always had a great love for the sea, a taste which I cannot say is shared by myself to that extent although I like it well enough for a change. We accordingly took a house in Brunswick Square, Brighton, which was once the residence of Mrs. Jordan, the mistress of William IV., and was a good enough house as Brighton houses go. I have always liked the climate of Brighton except in July and August when the heat and glare are generally appalling; as a town it has great possibilities, with its splendid train service and its bracing air. The first thing, however, that ought to be done is to pull down three-fourths of the houses on the front from one end to the other and build houses that are more up to date. Brighton contains the most extraordinary collection of residents, and although there are of course many very nice people living there, Society in the ordinary sense of the word does not exist, and has not existed for the last seventy or eighty years.

I now decided to have some horses in training with Fred Barrett, who had his training stables at Southwick, quite close to Brighton. I bought two or three horses, and shortly afterwards seven yearlings from Mr. Graham the owner of the famous Yardley Stud. I now had ten or a dozen horses in training in Barrett's stables. We, however, got influenza in its most virulent form into the stable just at the beginning of the racing season; in spite of all our precautions nearly all the horses in the stable were down with it, many of them being seriously ill. This spoilt all our plans for the Spring and we did no good that year, which was the end of racing so far as I was concerned. I sold off all my racing stud, keeping only one, a horse called "Greenfly," which I decided to keep as a hack. If I derived no other advantage in my season's racing on this occasion I at all events derived one which will always remain fresh in my memory, namely, close personal contact with poor Fred Barrett my trainer. I very much doubt whether any man in the world ever knew Barrett as I knew him; they knew him well no doubt in his capacity as a public trainer and on the turf, but I knew his real inner life and character as a husband, a father, and a friend. The more I knew of him



the more I respected him, and a sincere attachment sprang up between us. I can never think of that little churchyard at Lewes without a lump in my throat.

About this time I received an invitation to go to Berlin on a visit to Baron and Baroness Bleichroder, who had recently completed and moved into their magnificent house on the Leipsiger Platz. Old Baron Bleichroder was the private banker of the Emperor William at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. He was enormously rich, in fact the richest man in Germany, and at his death he left his immense fortune to his three sons, one of whom was killed in a motor accident near Paris, and the eldest of whom (Baron James) was my host on this occasion. I had never been to Berlin before; my stay there was naturally most comfortable and agreeable; nothing could exceed the kindness of my host and hostess. There are some fine buildings in Berlin and the Linden is charming. I was, however, not pleased with the Thiergarten, which is entirely spoilt by the number as well as the inferiority of its statues. I went out often while in Berlin Society, and met some charming people. I cannot speak one word of German, but always found that French would carry one safely through



in Berlin. My boy had been staying with the Bleichroders for some months and at the close of my visit I took him home with me.

## CHAPTER XVII

Wargrave Court. The Thames Conservancy. Highwaymen. A Burglary. Glenthorne. My Hack makes me walk home.

**A**S my wife and children were very keen on the river, I made up my mind to take Wargrave Court, a very pretty old place standing back from the river at the end of a private backwater. Wargrave Court is in many respects a most charming place, standing in very pretty and beautifully timbered grounds. It was, however, too much overlooked on one side by Wargrave Church, which was, as some of my readers may remember, burnt down some time afterwards by Suffragettes. That backwater leads into the grounds and ends there; it is in fact a cul-de-sac. People were, however, beginning to encroach upon it to such an extent

that they would sometimes get out of their boats and walk to the station through my grounds. On other occasions well-dressed hooligans, for I can call them nothing else, would actually land on my lawn and help themselves to my roses. I, therefore, closed it with a chain across the entrance. That most overbearing, impertinent, and dictatorial body known as the Thames Conservancy immediately threatened me with all sorts of pains and penalties unless I removed it. I went, however, to law with them and beat them, much to the annoyance of one or two of my near neighbours at Wargrave, who look upon the Thames Conservancy men as little tin gods.

I had six horses at Wargrave as now my eldest daughter and my boy were both riding. The drawback, however, to that country is that it is very unsuitable for riding as there is nowhere to ride to, and I missed the Berkshire and Sussex Downs. I had residing with us at that time a private tutor for my boy, who had been with us for some years, a Mr. Calistri, a fine linguist and a really good fellow. My son was, however, by this time beginning to be a bit of a handful, and the first occasion on which he began to distinguish himself in public life was as follows. There was at that time in Wargrave

another boy named Betts, a very nice boy whom we knew very well, who was his constant companion, and I think I may say a kindred spirit. When these two boys got together they were generally looking for trouble. They had for some reason or other sworn a sort of blood feud against a man who drove a baker's cart in Wargrave, and having discovered somewhere an old broken and rusty pistol they decided to hold up their enemy in the most approved fashion of the Wild West. Accordingly when the peaceful purveyor of the family loaf had finished his rounds and was driving slowly home, two bloodthirsty and murderous ruffians suddenly jumped up from the ditch, covered him with their prehistoric weapon, and ordered him to stand and deliver. Instead of doing so, however, he uttered a loud yell, whipped up his horse and galloped into Wargrave, where in a state of panic he gave a thrilling account of the danger through which he had passed. All this was followed by a summons for the two boys to appear before the Magistrates at Wokingham, where they explained the facts to a highly amused Bench, and were fined one shilling each. In the next edition of the local paper there was a most amusing account of it with a big headline :

“MODERN HIGHWAYMEN AT WARGRAVE.”



During my stay at Wargrave Court we had a burglary. We had at the time two or three dogs, all of whom lived in the house, one of them being a white Eskimo, who always slept in the hall at night on a small mattress which was placed for that purpose underneath the staircase. He had rather annoyed me on more than one occasion by barking in the night at nothing in particular, which had caused me to get out of bed and go downstairs in the cold for nothing. One night my wife woke me up and said, "Listen to Snow barking. I am sure there are burglars in the house." "Hang Snow," I replied, "he's not going to make a fool of me any more." And I turned over to go to sleep again. Just at that moment, however, I heard in the dog's voice a particular intonation, which, as I had had much to do with dogs all my life, immediately caused me to spring out of bed because I then felt certain that he was really attacking somebody at close quarters. I rushed downstairs where I could distinctly hear the sound of footsteps running down the passage toward the servants' quarters with Snow in pursuit. Just at this moment my wife, who had thrown open our bedroom window, shouted to me from upstairs, "Quick! They have got out and are running up the drive." I rushed

to the front door to open it, but had to pull back two great bolts, take down a strong chain, and unlock it. I heard them distinctly run past the door. I threw the door open and rushed up the drive, but it was a pitch dark night and they had vanished. We found the library in great confusion. There had been a determined but unsuccessful attempt to open the safe in that room, but they got away with only two or three little things of no particular value.

I had long had my eye on a place in Devonshire, which had in fact become to me a veritable Naboth's vineyard. At this time my hope was at last fulfilled and I leased it. The name of the place was Glenthorne. It is not easy to describe such a place. I will, however, begin by saying I am quite satisfied that it is without any exception, taking all things into consideration, the most beautiful place in the whole of England, and that is the opinion of hundreds of people who have seen it. Situated between Minehead and Lynmouth it is far from a railway station. Approaching it from Minehead, which was the station we always used, you drive through the most glorious country, finally reaching the lovely village of Porlock, standing over Porlock Bay. You then have the choice of ascending Por-

lock Hill, which is I believe the steepest, or at all events nearly the steepest hill in England, and about three miles long ! Or you can go round by a new road on a lower level, which is much easier, but adds about a mile to the length of the journey. In daylight the latter course is the best. You eventually arrive at the highest point of the main road ; to your right is a glorious panoramic view of the sea, with wild oceans of heather and woods leading down to its very edge ; to your left is the same scenery only stretching away across the beautiful hills and valleys of Exmoor. Another mile and you come to a gate across the road at a spot that is known as " The Gates of Devon." Another hundred yards or so and on the right-hand side of the road is an ordinary field gate. You enter this, drive about two hundred yards along a private road and then come to a picturesque Lodge with some high Lodge gates. Enter, and you are in an earthly paradise. The drive from the Lodge gates to the house is three miles long ; the road zig-zags and winds down the hill like a serpent. Every step of the road is a fit subject for the artist's brush ; the forest trees meet above your head, on each side of you is a tangled wilderness of rhododendrons of all colours in full bloom, masses of every kind of wild



fern that is known in England line the road, mixed with the lovely pink flower of the foxglove, on the mossy banks that overhang the road on either side ; at frequent intervals you pass the entrance to some grass pathway, carved like a tunnel through the undergrowth and winding away for miles through the overhanging woods, while all the time as you descend the hill the sea is ever with you on your left peeping through the archways of the trees ; listen, and you hear the sound of running water and meet from time to time streams that come creeping through the flowers and ferns, splashing from rock to rock, till they discharge themselves like a silver shower on the beach 1,500 feet below. After a drive of three miles through this glorious specimen of creative skill, and when you have made a descent of 1,500 feet, you come at last to a turn to the left which brings you out upon a tableland of green velvet lawns and flowers with a terrace against which the sea is washing another hundred feet below. To your left, approached by a broad gravel sweep, stands the house—a picturesque grey stone and gabled building, containing many charming rooms but above all a most beautiful and fascinating library. No words of mine could ever describe the beauties of Glenthorne ; it is mentioned in many



books, but more especially in Mr. Blackmore's famous novel "Lorna Doone," and in White Melville's fascinating book "Katerfelto." While roaming through this lovely estate I could not forget that I was treading the ground where John Ridd walked with Lorna and where John Garnett met Parson Gale. There are at Glenthorne 4,000 acres of shooting; also a long stretch of salmon fishing, and the famous beauty spot known as Waters Meet is on the estate, while at night the wild red deer come stealing through the woods.

I kept at Glenthorne only two riding horses, one of which was a three-year-old called "Grimsdyke," formerly the property of Mr. Pizey, and a winner of one or two races. This animal I had only recently purchased; he was a very quiet handy sort of a horse to ride, the sort of animal that (as the dealers used to say), "you could canter round the brim of your hat." He had, however, one fault, which was that if you did have to get off him for any purpose he would do his level best to prevent you from ever getting on again. I was riding home one evening rather late for dinner, and arriving at the Lodge gates I shouted to attract the gamekeeper's wife in the Lodge so that she might come and open the gate, but either she was out or

else could not hear ; so finally I had to jump off my horse and open it myself. This was all right enough, but the question was how to get on again. I tried to mount him as a matter of course, but he " wasn't having any." Then I pushed him up against the gate and had another try, but he reared straight up on end and that attempt was a failure. Then I had a brilliant idea and tied his head up very short by the reins to the top of the gate and then vaulted on to him, but I had forgotten one little point, so that when I leant forward to try and untie them he threw his head about to such an extent that to my intense disgust I had to get off again. I now made two or three attempts to vault on him, but he was always too quick for me. By this time I was decidedly out of temper and made a sort of running vault at him, but on this occasion instead of swerving away from me he suddenly swerved toward me with the result that I went over him and landed on my back on the off side in the middle of the road. He then lashed out at me catching me full on the thigh ; he then gave me another blow on the back of the head just for luck. Fortunately the second time he caught me only with his fetlock, giving me a sort of glancing blow, or I might not be writing these Memoirs and the

world might have lost this great literary masterpiece! Now, however, a very queer thing happened; most horses at this point would have either stood still where they were and allowed me to catch them, or they would have simply run away home and left me to my own devices. He did neither one thing nor the other; he proceeded to walk home quietly and deliberately, always keeping in the middle of the road and always four or five yards in front of me, and in this order we walked for the whole of the three miles, but if I made any attempt whatever to catch him he simply trotted on a few yards and then once more resumed his walk.

## CHAPTER XVIII .

My Narrow Escape in a Railway Carriage. My Driving Accident. Lady Florence Dixie and her Jaguar. Lady Florence's attempted Assassination. My Special Train.

I SHOULD have been quite content to spend the rest of my days at Glenthorne, but it was not possible. I had to be within easy reach of London. We found ourselves once more at Brighton, where we took a house in Brunswick Terrace for about two years. Talking of Brighton reminds me of a strange incident that occurred to me in the course of a journey to London. I was sitting in the corner seat of a first-class compartment talking to a lady, who was seated on the opposite side of the carriage in the corner furthest from myself, and who is well-known for her great interest in dogs of various



breeds. Owing to the noise of the train I could not hear very distinctly what she was saying. We were, so far as I can remember, in the neighbourhood of Three Bridges, when I moved from my seat to the other end of the carriage and seated myself in the corner facing the lady in question. About three or four seconds later a bullet penetrated the window exactly on a level with the side of my head by the seat where I had been sitting, making a small round hole in the glass, passing across the carriage, and through the window of the opposite side. On my arrival at Victoria Station the railway authorities telegraphed down the line and made every enquiry, but the railway police were never able to discover the origin of the mishap. I was rather amused to see in the evening papers a paragraph headed, "Strange Occurrence on the Brighton Line—Narrow Escape of a Passenger."

My youngest boy was now at school. My unmarried daughter was frequently on a visit to my married daughter in Ireland, where my wife and I used to join them from time to time. Just then the Ulster troubles in Ireland were at their height, and were to us a matter of great interest. I might mention that I am an out and out Ulsterman of the most pronounced type and a great admirer of Lord

Carson, in spite of the fact that one of my ancestors on my mother's side was the famous Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the leader of the Irish Rebellion.

I now rented a charming old place in Kent about five miles from Faversham called Eastling Manor, a lovely specimen of the old half-timbered house, dating back to 1600, which originally formed part of the property of Bishop Odo, and stands in a very pretty old-world garden. Our Stay at Eastling was a quiet and uneventful time, and I spent most of my time in shooting.

I had a rather queer experience while living at Eastling. I returned one winter's night from London by the last train; there was a fearful storm, very dark, pouring with rain and blowing half a gale. I had ordered a carriage from the hotel at Faversham to meet me and had arranged with the driver that he should call beforehand at a laundry in the town for a very large parcel of clean clothes which my wife particularly wished me to bring back with me, and this he did. We started on our homeward drive and all went well for about three and a half miles, but when we had reached a spot on the road about one and a quarter miles from Eastling Manor our horse without any warning

whatever suddenly sprang up into the air, gave a loud scream and rolled over a small low bank on the left side of the road, dragging the carriage with him into the field. On examining him I found that he was stone dead. The next question was what to do with the washing. I was determined not to be beaten to get it home; I therefore seized the parcel in my arms, faced the storm and started homeward. I had gone about a quarter of a mile when to my horror I found that the rain had reduced the brown paper to pulp; the string had consequently cut through the parcel at both ends, and I was leaving on the road behind me a trail of ladies' undergarments. I had to retrace my steps and go groping about on the dark road in my endeavours to retrieve chemises, camisoles, etc.; in the meantime the rain was pouring down my neck and I was wet to the skin. By this time I was in despair, hugging the great parcel in my arms while occasionally stooping to pick up some falling article and frantically squeezing it into an outside pocket of my greatcoat. I at last reached the house of a neighbouring farmer whom I knew, and kicked at his front door with my foot. When the door had been opened by his wife, I flung the soddened parcel into the hall explaining what had



happened, and asked her to take care of it till the morning. Her husband kindly started out to see what assistance he could give to the driver of the dead horse.

Talking of this reminds me that my career has been wonderfully free from driving accidents, and I have had only one that was attended with injury to myself. I was staying with some friends at a place called The Willows, Windsor, and was myself driving in a two-wheeled cart to catch the last train at night, the groom sitting beside me. It was a brilliant moonlight night and the horse kept shying across the road at almost every shadow we met. After a while I got rather out of temper with him. Just as we reached Windsor Racecourse he made a particularly violent shy at the nearside of the road where there was a deep ditch. Whereupon I leant forward, picked him up short and threw him back on his hocks. Immediately an extraordinary thing happened, for both the shafts broke simultaneously, so that the trap was still fastened to the horse by the traces but there was nothing to balance it, and as all the weight was in front, it began to bump on his hocks. In a few seconds he kicked the front out and bolted madly. Exactly what happened I never quite knew, but I found myself after some



time lying face downwards on some newly laid stones in a large pool of blood ; the groom was lying insensible on the grass on the opposite side of the road. The horse ran away with the trap, or rather what remained of it, all the way into Windsor, finally galloping into the Cavalry Barracks where he was captured. I was very badly cut about and had to be sewn up in three or four places ; the groom had concussion of the brain, but recovered.

Talking of The Willows reminds me that I had another very queer experience while staying at that house. The adjoining property is a place called The Fisheries, which was at that time the property of Sir Beaumont and Lady Florence Dixie, who was a sister of Lord Queensberry, and who will be well remembered for her eccentricities.

The garden of the Willows was divided from an orchard which formed part of The Fisheries Estate by a fence and a deep ditch. I had been all day on the river and was wearing boating flannels and shoes when I thought I would go round and see Lady Florence. I made up my mind to take a short cut by jumping the hedge and ditch. I took a good run at it and cleared both with plenty to spare, but imagine my horror when in mid-air I looked down and saw that I was landing on a huge live jaguar,

which was lying asleep on the grass. I missed him by a few inches. The moment my feet touched the ground I jumped off the mark like lightning and made straight for the drawing-room window. 'I do not believe that the fastest professional sprinter in England could have beaten my time when I crossed that lawn. I entered Lady Florence's drawing-room like a run-away horse. "What on earth has happened?" she exclaimed. "Happened?" said I, "why there's a live jaguar in the garden." Upon which she laughed and said, "Oh, he is fastened up by a big chain to the tree." "I wish to goodness I had known that," I remarked. Sometime after this the jaguar escaped, got into Windsor Forest, killed various sheep, deer, etc., and set up for some days a reign of terror, but was eventually captured alive and sent to the Zoological Gardens, where I used occasionally to gaze upon him thinking of our first introduction. It was at a spot about four hundred yards from this that some years afterwards Lady Florence startled the world by a sensational account of an attempt that she said had been made by Fenians to assassinate her, the assassins being, she declared, two men dressed in women's clothes, and she showed two cuts in her stays which she said were

caused by their knives. The affair caused a great sensation at the time and Her Majesty Queen Victoria sent over on several occasions from Windsor to enquire about the state of Lady Florence's health, but no trace whatever was ever found of these dangerous criminals who apparently vanished into thin air.

I had among other things a weakness for special trains and one day, having missed the train at Windsor and it being of the utmost importance that I should reach London by a certain hour, I immediately ordered a special train. As most of my readers are aware special trains are non-stop trains, and never pull up till they reach their destination unless they are forced to by some unexpected circumstances. In this case my train ran as usual straight through to Paddington, where when I stepped out on to the platform I saw a man surrounded by a knot of porters and other railway officials, who was wildly gesticulating and making at the top of his voice the most violent complaints about something or other. At this moment he approached me and in angry tones informed me that he had missed at Windsor the same train as I, that he had had a most important appointment at Slough, which is the next station to Windsor, that



he had got into my train thinking it would stop at Slough, and had naturally enough been carried to Paddington. Apparently he considered that on this account he had a sort of personal grievance against myself, which seemed in the circumstances unreasonable, and as his manner was extremely rude I turned round upon him and glaring at him shook my finger in his face and said, "Sir, you are not a lawyer; you do not know what you have done. You have committed a fraud, sir, a gross fraud, in fact, sir, you have committed a criminal offence. You have obtained a passage in my train, sir, my private train, sir, by fraud and misrepresentation." At this point I left him limp and speechless.

Speaking of Eastling Manor reminds me that it was once my intention to rent another very interesting and beautiful old place also in the county of Kent. The name of this place was Stern Cote. I travelled down with my brother Edgar and with a friend of ours, Mr. Evelyn Fanshawe. The more we saw of this lovely old place the more we fell in love with it; the family were not in residence at the time and we were shown round by a butler of the real old-fashioned type. He was a most courteous and communicative guide, but throughout the whole of our visit he never smiled or altered the



expression of his face. On entering the dining-room although it was in summer time I shivered slightly and remarked to our guide, "This must be a very cold room in the winter." "Cold, sir, cold did you say, sir, yes sir—gentlemen always dines in greatcoats in the winter, sir." This set me thinking, so I asked, "Is the house damp?" "Damp, sir, did you say damp, sir?" he replied, "a foot of water on the library floor, sir, sometimes in the winter." By this time I was becoming disenchanted and said to him, "Are the drains in order?" "Drains, sir, did you say drains, sir? We hain't got no drains, sir." At this point we fled, being bowed out by this dignified old gentleman, still without a smile or a change of expression on his face. When we got out of the house we all three sat down on the parapet of the moat, leant against each other for support, and laughed hysterically.

At this point of our lives began the terrible war that has caused such misery to this country and to the whole of Europe. It is not necessary to discuss the war here; I will only remark that not long after the outbreak of hostilities at a public meeting in Kent where Lord Harris, Mr. Wheeler, and myself were the speakers, I made use of the following

words in the course of my speech, "I have no fear of the ultimate issue of this war, but what I fear are the terms of peace." That fear for a long time remained my only fear so far as the result was concerned. I thank God that He brought all my dear ones safely through this terrible war and gave us the victory over our enemies.

I had rather a strange adventure about twelve months after the outbreak of hostilities. I was walking home one evening along Pall Mall on my way to dress for dinner, and when I had just reached a spot opposite the Guards' Club a large motor car that was being driven by a chauffeur, and in which was seated one other occupant, a man, pulled up by the side of me, the passenger addressing me the question, "Can you tell me the way to the War Office?" I replied, "You are coming away from it." He then asked me to direct his chauffeur and explain to him where it was. I ought to mention that the man was dressed in the uniform of a British officer. As he appeared to be in a great hurry, and I had plenty of time on my hands at the moment, I complied with his request that I should get into the car and guide his chauffeur. On our arrival at the War Office I stepped out of the car and to my astonishment he pushed by me without a single

word of thanks or any remark whatever. I confess I was extremely annoyed at his want of courtesy. I, however, thought no more about it and began to cross the road with the intention of passing under the arch of the Horseguards. I had hardly got half across Parliament Street when the chauffeur ran after me and said, "I beg your pardon, sir, but there is something wrong here which I can't make out. I don't know this man and I do not like the instructions he has given me," upon which I remarked, "You had better tell me what instructions he did give you." He then informed me that this officer, or supposed officer, had ordered him on the telephone to pick him up at a well-known restaurant in the West End, that on his arrival there he had given him instructions to drive him down a certain part of the East Coast and to turn out quickly or turn up as the case might be, the electric head lamps in front of the car whenever he instructed him to do so. On hearing this I came to the conclusion that this officer was either a lunatic or a spy. I advised him to enter the War Office immediately and inform the two policemen at the door. Whether he did so or not I have never known, but by a peculiar coincidence I noticed on reading the evening paper on the following day that



a spy masquerading in the uniform of a British officer had been arrested at Dover while attempting to enter some part of the defences of that place.



## CHAPTER XIX

Society of To-day, Bohemian and otherwise. Smoking among Women. Skittles. Inspector Moser. I am taken for a burglar. My brother Guy is introduced to some Nurses on the Sands. Burglars in the Wine Cellar. Lord Aylesbury. Sir John Bennett. Hughie Drummond.

**L**OOKING at London to-day, and looking back at London in the past, one cannot fail to notice many very great changes. The most noticeable to my mind is the increase of restaurant life, and the decrease of home life. This I am satisfied is deeply to be deplored. There are of course a few exceptions to every rule under the sun, but speaking generally it is the home life of England that humanly speaking has in the past made her what she is, and it is home life alone that can build up the characters of her men and women. Now-a-days no thinking man of the most ordinary intelligence or possessed of any real know-

ledge of the world can possibly view the condition of affairs without the keenest regret. In London you see ever diminishing family circles ; fathers and mothers who see less and less of their children, in fact in thousands of cases it would be no exaggeration to say that the parents know much less of their children than anybody else. The one prevailing idea is to dress—or undress—and rush off to some restaurant for luncheon, tea, dinner or supper. Then if something goes wrong with the sons or daughters and all is not as it should be, there are looks of pained surprise as if there was something remarkable about the event. What else can you expect if you have no home life and no family circle in the true sense of the word, and with what right can you expect to have any influence on your children? In this respect we might well follow the example of the Jewish community with their high ideals of family life, and the respect that is shown by children to their parents. There is another most noticeable change, namely, the remarkable and lamentable development of smoking among women. Thank goodness no woman member of my family smokes ; nor would I allow my wife or daughter to do so, but thank goodness none of them have any desire for that vice. In my opinion

smoking among women is a vulgar and disgusting habit. No woman ever looks such a consummate fool as when she has a cigarette sticking out of the corner of her mouth. Many of them smoke merely because they deem smoking up to date and smart; others because they really like it. It originally arose among a certain type of Spanish and Mexican prostitute and it is a thousand pities that it did not stop there.

There is also a remarkable change in the Bohemian life of London. In my day you might divide Bohemian life into two halves, the first half being composed of the real élite of the stage, music, art and letters. The members of that circle were there purely and simply not because of who they were but of what they were. Among them could be found some of the most delightful people of the day, witty, clever and entertaining, but at the same time refined. Bohemia to-day is in many cases vastly different and is apt to try and draw attention to itself by being noisy, *outré*, and vulgar. The second half of Bohemia was what I can perhaps best describe as the submerged half, that is to say people who could not claim to be considered respectable. I can carry my mind back to the days of Mabel Grey, Cora Pearl, and the famous

Skittles. Talking of the latter reminds me of a story that was told me by Augustus Lumley. Skittles possessed a most wonderful pair of high-stepping thoroughbred chestnut horses, which were given her I believe by a Russian Prince, and one of which I used frequently to see her riding in the Park. She looked extremely well on a horse, provided her horse was always on his best behaviour and never did anything wrong, and in fact she rarely went beyond a walk. She was riding in the Row one day during the London Season, when her horse so far forgot himself as to kick and buck twice or thrice, with the result that his fair rider was deposited on her back in the mud. Augustus Lumley, who was one of the most polite of men, happened to be leaning against the rails close by; he immediately sprang forward and with his most courteous bow and most polished manner for which he was famous, helped her to get up, and asked her whether she was hurt. With one eye on Augustus and the other glaring at her horse Skittles said, "Hurt be damned, you wait till I get my—— (mentioning a certain portion of her anatomy) on that damned saddle, I'll teach the—— to go."

About thirty-five years ago or thereabouts I used to go very frequently to a house in Grove End



Road, St. John's Wood, either to dinner or to supper. My hostess was an extremely pretty and most fascinating woman and was living under the protection of a wealthy brewer, whom I afterwards knew very well. She had a lovely house there with, for London, quite a good garden. These dinners and suppers were exactly what they ought to be in that particular kind of Bohemian circle. Among the most frequent guests were Coquelin (the famous French actor), Madame Judic (the great French actress), Isidore de Lara, Dr. Leslie (the war correspondent) who was afterwards killed, and others. Sometimes de Lara and myself would be asked to sing at all sorts of odd times, even at the supper table; or Madame Judic and Coquelin would suddenly rehearse some scene from a leading French play. The evening would frequently finish with our doing something of the same sort by moonlight in the garden. Poor Mrs.— committed suicide some years afterwards in her villa at Ostend.

I did a great deal of what is called "slumming" at one time; sometimes by myself, and frequently in company with that famous detective Inspector Maurice Moser of Scotland Yard. I was a good deal in the East End at the time of that mysterious sequence of crimes known as the Whitechapel

murders and was well acquainted with Flower Street and Dean Street. I made a study of the opium dens and thieves' kitchens, most of which have I believe long ago disappeared. I have sat round the fire with the thieves, both male and female, some of whom (I regret to say) were children, and I have taken part in a dance at the Prussian Eagle near the docks on a sanded floor; in fact I have made a complete study of all that side of life at first-hand, and am of opinion that it did me a great deal of good.

Talking of Inspector Moser reminds me that just about that time I met him one morning in Trafalgar Square, and he informed me that he held a warrant for a famous French criminal, who was known as "Chapeau Rouge," and was wanted for two or three murders, to say nothing of other crimes. He told me that he had got a clue to this scoundrel's whereabouts in London, and he asked me whether I would like to come with him, adding that it might possibly be dangerous. This was quite enough for me. I cannot remember where it was we went, but I know that it was north London, and have a sort of idea that it was somewhere in the direction of Holloway. We called at a house where Moser made some enquiries about certain letters: we then

left, and as we were walking through a low sort of square we saw two men walking toward us. Moser looked quickly at them and the moment they had passed he drew a photograph from his pocket, and looking at it exclaimed to me, "That is 'Chapeau Rouge' himself." We turned quietly round and walking up behind them he said to him in French, "Good morning Mr.——" (mentioning his real name). He was taken off his guard and turned round quickly in response to the name. Moser then told him who he was and arrested him; he then denied his identity. Moser, however, was now quite certain of his man. In a very short time we were surrounded by a small crowd of foreigners, who it was easy to see were most of them very undesirable characters. The men began to hustle us. Moser pinned his man against the iron railings of the Square while I turned my attention to protecting him. One man now rushed at me, placing his hand to his hip pocket in a way which was to say the least of it suggestive. I knew that it was a case of acting quickly and landed him a terrific right-hand punch on the jaw, putting him down and out. Another of his pals then took a running kick at my stomach, but I caught his leg just before it reached its mark and getting it under my arm con-



trived to hold it there. Just at that moment two uniformed constables put in a most opportune appearance and Moser got his man safely to the police station. I am told that an account of this adventure can be found in the reminiscences of Maurice Moser. I afterwards heard that I had been described on this occasion as Inspector Sebright, the famous detective, but if I was on that occasion taken for a detective, I was also on another occasion taken for a burglar.

I was spending a week-end at Eastbourne, and on Sunday morning was walking along the front together with an old friend of mine, a certain distinguished lawyer. We had not walked far before we noticed a particularly nice house in a large garden which had upon it a board To Let. Just at that time my wife and family were again talking of living by the seaside, so I remarked to my friend that was exactly the kind of place they would like. The trouble was, however, that I had to go back to London the following morning by a very early train and should, therefore, have no opportunity of seeing the firm of house-agents whose name appeared upon the board. Finally we decided to call at the house and ask the caretaker whether she would allow us to look over it. We opened the



garden gate, strolled down the path and rang the bell. There was no reply ; we could hear the bell ringing loudly and rang several times, but still there was no sign of life ; all the blinds were drawn and the house had a deserted air. Just then I noticed that one of the windows on the ground floor was partly open. As we were both of us quite satisfied by now that the house was empty we opened the window and walked in ; we strolled round the ground floor and found to our surprise that it was fully furnished. We had hardly been there two minutes when we heard the sound of footsteps descending the stairs and there appeared a woman who turned out to be the caretaker. She was in a terrible state of alarm, told us that she knew we were burglars, but implored us not to molest her or injure her in any way, and promised that if we would take our departure without hurting her or stealing anything she would not telephone to the police. My friend and I talked and argued with her, both of us using all the persuasive eloquence at our command, but could make no impression. We therefore departed, feeling decidedly crest-fallen. Strangely enough I afterwards discovered that the house belonged to an old schoolfriend of mine.

The mention of Eastbourne reminds me that my two brothers and myself used often to go there when we were lads and a rather funny thing happened there when my brother Guy and I were bathing from one of the local bathing machines. We had come out of the sea, and had divested ourselves of our bathing costumes, and were in the midst of drying ourselves when the proprietor of the machines thought fit to hitch the horse that was kept for that purpose to our machine, and whipping him up proceeded to drag us for some considerable distance up the beach which at that moment was crowded with children in charge of their mothers, nurses, etc. A bathing machine is at any time a rough conveyance when it is being dragged up by a horse. Almost immediately after the beginning of our journey the lurching of the machine caused me to collide with my brother, which caused him to fall out through the door, landing on his back in an admiring circle of nursery maids and governesses, he being at the time in a complete state of nature. In this airy costume he did a very fine sprint through the crowd in his endeavours to catch the retreating machine while I stood in the doorway, wrapped in a large towel and encouraging him to further efforts.

Talking of burglars reminds me that I was once in a country house and down in the wine cellar just before dinner in the company of two burglars, but in complete ignorance of their presence. The house was ransacked during the night and we afterwards learnt from the confession of one of them who was arrested later on for another burglary, that while I was standing by one of the wine bins these two enterprising gentlemen were lying on the stone floor under the bottom shelf and that so close was I to them at the moment that the end of my trouser was actually touching one of them for some minutes. During the night they forced open the cellar door and began their professional duties.

I am frequently asked about the various characters whom I have met on the turf in the course of my career. One of the most extraordinary characters I have ever met was Lord Aylesbury. His turf career was not a long one, but while it lasted was full of incident. I was sitting one Derby day on a coach at Epsom when I saw Aylesbury, who had just been accosted from behind by a well-known nigger minstrel who used to frequent most of the racecourses. "My lord," said he, "my lord," he repeated several times, finally giving my lord a sharp nudge in the back.



Aylesbury turned sharply round and seizing his tormentor's banjo brought it down with a bang on the head of the coloured minstrel leaving the instrument hanging round his neck.

The following funny story is told about this extraordinary and decidedly unconventional peer. When he came of age a dinner was given at the Aylesbury Arms at Marlborough to the tenants on the estate. It was I think Lord Henry Bruce who had up to that time been acting as trustee of the estate during Aylesbury's minority, and thinking that he ought to begin by introducing him (Aylesbury) to the oldest tenant on the estate who was quite one of the old school, he led him up to that gentleman, Mr.—, and having effected the introduction left them to attend to other matters. About ten minutes later he met this much respected tenant and asked him how he had got on with his lordship. "Ah," replied the worthy old gentleman, "he is a wonderful young gentleman—a wonderful young gentleman is his lordship. Do you know, my lord, that he had not known me more than five minutes before he called me a b—— old b—— three times?"

Lord James Douglas once told me rather a funny story about Aylesbury. He had taken a house



called The Hatch, Windsor, for Ascot week, and he had staying with him among others a certain young man called Tim Riley. This young man was supposed to be rather an admirer of Lady Aylesbury. That evening he was sitting next to his host. At dinner Riley began to pay some rather extravagant compliments to Lady Aylesbury, whereupon Aylesbury seizing the soup tureen which was nearly half full of soup effectually extinguished the young gentleman's ardour by cramming it with its contents over the top of his head.

There used to exist in those days a most wonderful old gentleman, by name Sir John Bennett, who was I believe an Alderman of the City of London. He had a round beaming face and rosy cheeks, always wore a huge pair of spectacles, a large blue fly-away bow tie and a black velvet jacket, in which get-up he invariably rode down to all the Epsom meetings but more especially to the Derby. He was quite a character and his appearance on the course was frequently greeted with cheers and good-natured laughter. I was sitting one Derby day on a coach looking at this quaint character when he rode up to the next coach but one to mine, on which was seated a number of men, among the party

being Hughie Drummond, who was then the most inveterate practical joker in London. He was sitting on the box seat, and seizing an opportunity when the old gentleman's back was turned he dropped down on his horse behind the saddle and clasping one arm round Sir John's waist and digging his heels into the horse's sides, he galloped off with him amid the loud cheers of the huge crowd. I could not help wondering at the time what would have been the innermost feelings of his brother Aldermen of the City of London had they been there to witness the sight.

The next coach to mine belonged to a certain Welsh baronet who had recently married a lady who I believe called herself an actress. This lady was so overcome with laughter at the sight of this new John Gilpin that she managed to fall off their coach backwards, but owing to the fact that her skirt somehow or other got hooked up to some portion of the roof of the coach she remained for about fifteen or twenty seconds suspended head downwards with her legs dangling in the air, the scene being rendered more preposterous by the fact that she was wearing silk undergarments of brilliant red trimmed with black lace.

Speaking of Hughie Drummond reminds me of

another practical joke connected with this young gentleman. He was walking one day in Piccadilly with a friend when an elderly gentleman who was walking in front of him suddenly slipped in the mud and came down in a sitting position. Hughie Drummond approached him and with a polite bow assisted him to rise, remarking at the same time. "My dear sir, would you mind doing that again?" "Doing what again, sir," replied the old gentleman, "what do you mean, sir? I have no desire to do it again, sir." "No, sir, no," replied Hughie Drummond, "but the fact is my friend didn't see it."

Two features of my career always strike me as peculiar; one is that in spite of all the serious falls and accidents I have had I have never in the whole of my life broken any one of my bones. I have been smashed up driving once, smashed up riding any number of times, thrown off a fire engine in London at the end of Southwark Bridge, had horses pulled off me with ropes, and once out hunting in the Vale of Aylesbury I jumped into a coprolite pit, and yet I have never broken a bone. On the other hand, numbers of my friends who have had comparatively few accidents have broken ribs, collar bones, arms and legs. The other matter that



surprises me is that in spite of the many queer places I have been in I have never in my life been robbed or had my pocket picked. I was once, however, under the impression that I had either had my pocket picked or that I had left the sum of £70 in a cab. What had really occurred was this. Feeling somewhat suspicious of the place to which I was going one night, I had taken the precaution of placing the £70 in notes down the inside of my sock. Strange as it may sound this fact had entirely escaped my memory. Later on in the evening I missed the money and thinking that I might have left it in the cab which I had recently paid off I immediately went to Scotland Yard. There I gave a full description of my loss which was circulated all over London by the police, entirely unconscious of the fact that at the actual moment when I was describing my loss to the inspector in charge, the whole of the money was in my boot—a fact which I never discovered until I undressed that night to go to bed. I need hardly say that the next morning I telephoned to Scotland Yard to inform them that the money had been found. I did not, however, deem it necessary to tell them where.

I am frequently asked for my opinion about the turf, and before giving it I should like to tell my readers a somewhat interesting story concerning a



much respected family now residing in a certain town in the south of England. Their grandfather began life with the proverbial shilling, but with strong sporting instincts, especially in the direction of the racecourse. One day in the course of his career he attended Doncaster Races. After the first day's racing, which had proved somewhat disastrous to himself, he was walking off the racecourse, which was, as it is generally at the end of the day, littered with various pieces of waste-paper, when a small piece of paper blew across his foot which he struck at with his stick but missed. On looking down he discovered that the piece of paper was a £10 note. He picked it up and placed it in his pocket. In those days there was a considerable amount of gambling at night in Doncaster during the race week. After dinner he repaired to one of the gambling rooms where, with the aid of the £10 in question he won a sum of £2,800. The following day he attended the races as usual and succeeded in backing the winner of every race during the day, two of them being at very long prices. He now found himself possessed of a sum of over £6,000. With this capital he started as a bookmaker, eventually becoming a licensed victualler and the proprietor of several hotels, all owing their origin to the £10 note that had been blown across his path.

## CHAPTER XX

### London Beggars.

I SHOULD like to make some remarks on the subject of the street beggars of London. I do not believe that there is any one member of the public who knows much more about them than I do, and I do not hesitate to say that there is no class of people in the world who are more utterly and totally undeserving of help than they are, and I quite believe the statement that was once made to me by one of the most experienced men in the whole of the professional begging fraternity in London. This man pitched a long tale to me one day in the street and I told him that he was a liar, without beating about the bush, which he eventually admitted to me he *was*, and told me that there was not one single man or woman begging in the streets of London who was not a liar and a fraud. One of the worst classes of all the begging fraternity are the men who accost you by name and

generally style you "Captain" or something of that sort and claim to have been in the same regiment as yourself, frequently remarking, "You may have forgotten me, sir, I am Sergeant——." They generally work in couples standing at street corners, where each one points out to the other all the well known men about town, whom he knows by sight, giving him at the same time a full description of the victim, name, habits, generosity or meanness (as the case may be). I have had many amusing experiences of these men. They are one and all idle loafers and mostly drunkards. There is, however among the fraternity one much worse class than the men I have just mentioned namely the women with babies wrapped in shawls who go about the streets with two or three faded flowers in their hands accosting ladies (elderly for choice). If they get nothing, they become abusive and insolent, frequently if their victims have arrived home following them up the steps of their houses, using abusive and threatening language. Nobody ought ever to give one farthing to these people, they are utterly undeserving in every respect, their stories are a tissue of lies, the money they get they drink away in the pubs, the babies they carry are in the large majority of cases not their own, but are hired

at a fixed price per day to play upon the sympathy of a foolish public. What they really deserve is a good hiding. Real poverty and real suffering never beg in the streets, but suffer in obscurity. The following particulars of three cases may, perhaps, interest my readers.

I was walking one evening in North Audley Street, Grosvenor Square when I was accosted by a woman with a baby wrapped in a shawl who told me the usual lying tale which I knew by heart so well, that I could have told it her just as well as she told it me. I told her to clear out and to do so quickly. She then said, "Oh, kind gentleman, I ain't one of them as wants money for drinks, I wants bread for the little ones, at home, only give me bread, kind gentleman." I confess that this rather took me off my guard, and I came to the conclusion that she might be genuine. We were opposite a baker's shop. I told her to wait a minute, I then walked into the shop and bought her a large loaf. The woman who served me at the counter said, "Excuse me, sir, but is it for that woman with a baby outside?" I replied that it was. She then asked me whether I would allow her to cut the loaf in two halves remarking, "You will see what she will do with it then;" I agreed. I



then took the two halves out and gave them to the woman. This supposed starving woman with a starving family threw one half in the gutter and the other half at my head, and departed toward Oxford Street, having called me every filthy name she could think of and her repertory was certainly considerable. I then re-entered the baker's shop and asked for an explanation from the woman who had served me, who informed me that this woman always pitched the bread yarn, and when she had got it believed, she went straight round to a public house and exchanged the large loaf for a drop of gin but if it was cut in half, the people would not take it in. The *second* instance I propose to relate is as follows :

I was walking up Piccadilly one afternoon wrapped in thought, when a little voice at my elbow said, "Can you tell me the way to Ealing, sir?" I looked down and saw a small boy about 9 or 10 years of age, a dear little boy with an angelic countenance and a frank and open look in his eyes. I looked at him and said, "Do you mean by the road?" "Yes, sir," said he. I remarked that it was a long way for a little fellow like himself to walk. "Yes, sir," said he, in a sad "far away" tone. I reminded him that there were trains,

trams and 'buses. "Yes, sir," said he, and hung his head down, looking at the pavement, with the sort of expression of "to beg I am ashamed!" I there and then took him to my heart mentally, and presented him with 5/- for his fare, so he thanked me with a look of deep emotion and departed (as I thought) to Ealing. About three weeks afterward Sir Mathers Wood was dining with me at Parish's Hotel when the conversation turned on street beggars and he said to me, "Yes, my dear fellow, and it is very hard on the genuine cases for they never beg, in fact only this evening I met such a nice bright little fellow in Piccadilly, who never asked me for anything you know, not that sort my dear fellow, wanted to know the way to Ealing, had to walk there, no money for a 'bus fare, so I gave him a few shillings just to help him on his road! "What?" said I, "why the little blackguard has been about three weeks getting there," and I told him all about it. It was I think not more than five or six days later that I was again strolling up Piccadilly when a little voice at my elbow said, "Please sir can you tell me the way to Ealing?" and I beheld my young friend once more. Before he could escape I dealt him two sounding boxes on the ear, and left him howling.

The third experience that I am about to relate was also connected with a small boy. I was walking across Kensington Gardens one foggy afternoon in the direction of Lancaster Gate, when I was accosted by a small boy who offered me some boot-laces for sale ; I got into conversation with him when he told me the following pitiable tale. He said that he lived with his father and mother in Nottingdale (which by the way is or was a great centre of the begging fraternity) ; the former he said was blind, as I daresay he was, but not in the sense that he wished me to believe, while his mother he said was paralysed, the landlord was in for rent and the home was to be sold up the next day. The story he told me pained me beyond words. I there and then asked him for his address and told him that if he would come straight to his home with me in a cab I would buy some food and coals for the family, and that I would see the landlord and pay the rent. I expected to see a joyous and happy look appear on his little face and to hear some expression of gratitude fall from his lips ; instead of which to my great astonishment a look of horror spread over his countenance, and the only thing that fell was the bundle of boot laces (which I used) as he fled at top speed and disappeared in the fog.



I will mention one other case of a begging impostor who annoyed me more perhaps than almost any other member of the fraternity has ever done. He had been the manager of a well known fashionable restaurant in the West End, but had lost his post and eventually took to begging in the street. He had stopped me several times and I always assisted him, as I had known him quite well in his capacity of manager to that restaurant. One day I was walking up Whitcombe Street, which leads out of Coventry Street into Panton Street when I saw him coming toward me and sure enough he came up to me and told me a most pitiable tale, saying that he had a wife and children who were starving, that they had had no food since the morning before, etc., and that if I would help him just this once he would hurry home and buy them some food. Now it happened that just at this particular time, I was about as hard up as I had ever been in my life, and was not in a position to lend or to give any money whatever to anybody. I have always, however, made it a rule that if I think a case is really genuine and I have the money, to give a helping hand, whether I can afford it or not. At that actual moment I had in my pocket about 10/- in silver. This I handed to him telling him to hurry



home which he said he would do as fast as he could. I walked on quietly for a few yards and then happened to turn round and looked after him when to my surprise he had disappeared. I rather wondered how he had managed to reach the corner of the next street, so quickly. I walked on, however, to the corner of Coventry Street opposite the Motor Club where I paused and became suspicious; and then retraced my steps till I reached the corner of Panton Street where there was, and I rather think still is, a public house. I carefully pushed the door open just sufficiently for me to see who was inside. I was not mistaken; the possessor of the starving wife and children, who had had no food for more than twenty-four hours, was seated on a stool at the bar with his feet on another stool, a large cigar in his mouth and a brandy and soda in his hand. This fairly set me going, as they say. I walked straight up to him, with my left hand I knocked the cigar out of his mouth, with the flat of my right I dealt him a swinging smack on the face, then seizing him by the neck I dragged him out of the pub and flung him into the road. I afterwards found out that he did not live with his wife and children, but had left them to starve.

## MY FRIEND BILL

Some thirty-three years ago I had a friend whose name was Bill, what his other name was I do not propose to say, and how I first made his acquaintance is neither here nor there. He was what the world calls a "professional man," but his profession is not generally recognised in polite society. The fact is my friend Bill was a burglar. He was not what you could exactly call a gentleman, and there is no getting away from the fact that members of the profession of which he was so bright an ornament are not as a rule invited to meet you at smart country house parties (although by the way they are occasionally). Yes, Bill was a burglar, but he was a man, a real man from the crown of his head to the tips of his toes, and I would rather have trusted him, than a considerable percentage of gentlemen in my own class and social position. Before giving a few reminiscences of my friend I proceed to describe his personal appearance as well as his personal character. He was about 5ft. 11in. in height, very deep chested and broad shouldered, with a square sort of face, a snub nose, an ugly scar on his forehead, which I believe he received in the course of his "professional" duties, and an iron grey moustache, whiskers and beard, cut short and to a point; his eyes had in them a merry twinkle,

he was immensely strong, wonderfully good tempered, but a terribly ugly customer in a fight, if it was forced upon him. He would fight Queensberry Rules, or any other rules, but "no rules" for choice. In appearance Bill could not be described as a beauty, but he had something that in a man is much more attractive than beauty, namely that indescribable quality called "personality" and women, children, and animals all loved him. As to his personal character, I can only say that he was a most loyal and devoted friend, generous to a fault, with a heart of gold; and chivalrous and courteous to women. Bill was among other things a bold gambler, but as far as racing was concerned although at times he would win large sums, I do not think he really knew much about it, and I should think that on the whole he was a loser.

I remember one day I drove down to Sandown Races with postillions, a mode of travelling that, so far as racing was concerned, I frequently indulged in. I arrived on the course about fifteen minutes before the first race, and we had just pulled up, when Bill sauntered up to me and we talked for a few minutes. He then remarked that I had better be careful of the pin I was wearing as it might easily be stolen. I remarked that he might also be care-



ful of his own, which was a valuable one, but he laughed at the idea of anybody robbing "him." A few minutes afterwards he remarked that it must be nearly time for the first race, and took hold of his watch chain to draw out his watch and look at the time. The chain dangled in his hand, the watch had already gone. His face was a study. "Well," he said, "I call that a dirty dishonest trick." This remark coming from him tickled my sense of humour, and I roared with laughter as he almost immediately did himself, although I do not think he quite understood what amused me so much. I forgot to mention that my friend also had an affliction, namely a peculiar habit of blinking violently with his eyelids. This habit was strongly emphasized in moments of anger or excitement, also when he was talking to women, for he was rather shy in their society. This affliction of his reminds me of rather a funny story. Bill was dining one night at a well-known and fashionable restaurant in the West End, and on the opposite side of the room and rather lower down, a certain Mr.—, well-known as a practical joker, who knew him intimately, was also dining together with a certain young man who was rather guileless about things in general. It so happened that this young



man suffered from the same affliction as Bill, namely a habit of blinking violently, which greatly increased in moments of nervousness. The practical joker pointed Bill out to this young man, and said, "Do you see that gentleman sitting down there, at that table by himself? He is a very distinguished man Mr.—whom you ought to know, go down there and say that you have often heard of him, and know a number of people he knows, etc.—" The young man did as he was bidden, and strolling down the room pulled up in front of Bill's table and accosted him, blushing violently all the time. Now if there was one thing more than another concerning which Bill was highly sensitive it was his affliction of the eyes. He glared at the young man, his face flushing up with anger, and blinking furiously, while the young man, who was beginning to feel very uncomfortable and nervous at the tone of his reception, blinked more furiously than ever.

The young man: "Sir, I should like to make your acquaintance," blink, blink, blink.

Bill: "What do you mean, sir?" blink, blink, blink.

Young man: "I think, sir, we have—some—mutual—friends," blink, blink, blink, blink.

Bill : “ Mutual friends be d——d, sir, I’ll teach you to make fun of my infirmities, sir ! ”—blink, blink, blink—blink, blink. At this point the practical joker approached, and explained that he had sent the young man, that he was a friend of his, and that he was in fact really afflicted in the same way as Bill himself. Some years after this I regret to say that Bill’s views about the ownership of property got him into serious trouble, and a little misunderstanding with a bank in the North, I think it was Leeds, led to his being sentenced to seven years penal servitude.

Years after this I was walking one morning down Pall Mall, when whom should I meet but our friend, looking very well, and as usual very smart. He confided to me that he had what he called “ a great financial scheme ” out of which he expected to make a large fortune. I told him that I was delighted to hear that he was now embarking on a really legitimate commercial deal, and asked him what it was. Whereupon he told me that he was about to hire a luxurious house in the suburbs, and having kidnaped Mr. J. D. Rockefeller the great American millionaire, who was expected in England at that time, he would convey him to this new abode of his and there hold him to ransom in the sum of one

million sterling! Within a month, however, he was himself dead, from inflammation of the lungs, the result of a bad chill.

Now no man in his senses is going to uphold the conduct of a man who adopts burglary as his profession, but so far as I am concerned, I am not going to shut my eyes or to ignore the fine qualities of a man, because he is a burglar any more than I would if he were a bishop. I have often had a good laugh, when I have tried to imagine the faces of some of my friends and acquaintances, if I had been walking with them down Piccadilly and we had met Bill, and I had stopped and spoken to him, and then turning to them had said, "Allow me to introduce you to my friend Mr. William ———, he is an eminent burglar!"

Poor Bill was generous, tender-hearted, and as brave as a lion. Moreover, he would rather have faced death than break his word, once given, to man, woman or child. He lived in the wrong age. If he had lived in the same period of the world's history as Robin Hood he, too, would probably have roamed Sherwood forest or some other equally romantic spot, and like that interesting outlaw, he too would have relieved the rich church dignitaries of their superfluous wealth, and distributed a portion of it among the neighbouring poor.



The fact is that the world is one huge seething cauldron of humbug and sham, and those who contain most gas generally bubble to the top or near it and although I could give an almost endless list of examples in support of this statement I will give my readers only four.

Many years ago, I was heavily in debt and one morning received a letter from a solicitor, the head of one of the greatest firms in London, threatening to issue a writ against me, whereupon I paid him a visit. He kept me in his room for about half an hour, during the whole of which time he continued to preach me a regular sermon on the shocking iniquity of being in debt, and living beyond one's means, etc. I left him, feeling duly chastened. Two days later, when I opened the morning paper, the first thing that caught my eye was some big head lines.

“GREAT FAILURE IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION,  
WELL-KNOWN SOLICITOR MISSING.”

To make a long story short, this man who had been lecturing me was already packing or packed ready for his flight, and absconded with over £250,000 of his clients' money, which he had embezzled.



About this time I found myself indebted to Lord —— the brother of a well-known peer, to the extent of some three or four hundred pounds. He went for me with the utmost rigour of the law, although he was himself fairly comfortably off, and was married to a woman with £15,000 a year. One day we met in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He proceeded to walk me thrice round the gardens and all the time lectured me severely on the immorality of debt and extravagance. I paid him the money a few days afterwards, and there was an end of it, so far as I was concerned. About a year after this, he also got into debt, and actually persuaded a young man whom I know, who had just come of age, and who was the elder son of a peer, to come with him to a firm of money-lending solicitors, where he induced him to sell his reversion to the whole of the family estates, and to hand over the entire proceeds to him ; not one penny of which he ever repaid, so that this young man who has now succeeded to the peerage and whom I saw the other day is now the possessor of the title without any rent roll.

Another old friend of mine, a peer in an important position, has for a long time expressed himself to others in terms of righteous indignation

concerning my "disgraceful extravagance, etc., etc." Now this man is a much respected member of society, but he does not know (though when he reads this book he will) and the world will never know, what I do, namely that this man went to a well-known firm of solicitors, whom I know intimately and borrowed from a client of theirs a large sum on some deeds that he had forged.

A few days ago I was lunching with a large party at The Ritz, and at a table not far from mine was seated a certain peer, a man of great wealth, a leading light in I do not know how many public institutions, and regarded in Society as the very embodiment of respectability. They do not know what I know. But without giving any further particulars I may say this. If certain facts were to come to light concerning which I have seen absolute proof, that man would stand a fair chance of seven or even ten years penal servitude.

Now what is my object in mentioning these matters to my readers? It is to ask them a question, which they can answer for themselves.

Whom would you rather sit down with at a dinner table, these gentlemen of high reputation and social position, or my late friend burglar Bill?

The fact is that if a man continues during the whole of his existence to live the ordinary life of that very small unimportant portion of the world, called London Society, without first hand experience of the rest of mankind he is bound to find himself in much the same position as a man who is wrecked on a small island and left there for the rest of his life. For he can see only just so far as his limited horizon will allow him, in other words he is mentally and intellectually “marooned.”

## CHAPTER XXI

The Turf as an Institution. The Ethics of Gambling. The Drink Question. Blackmailers and Blackmailing. The British Court. King Edward. King Edward's Watch. Our Present Queen. Unconscious Humour in a Sermon. How to Keep Young. Prejudice the ruling spirit of the age.

**I** TAKE this opportunity to say something concerning that much discussed but much misunderstood subject the Turf. Let me begin by saying that out of every hundred men who discuss and run down the Turf it is quite safe to say that ninety-seven know nothing whatever about it. First of all it is essential to consider for a moment what people mean by "The Turf." There are thousands of people in this world who when travelling down the line on some racing day have had the misfortune to meet some of the low blackguardly characters who hang on the fringe of



racecourses; they have heard them using filthy language and generally making beasts of themselves, and they go away with the impression that these are racing men on the turf, and they very naturally proceed on their journey wishing that these ruffians were under the turf instead of on it. Of course these brutes have no more to do with the turf, or with racing, than I have with the North Pole; they are simply professional criminals who frequent all large crowds wherever they think that there may be an opportunity of getting money either by violence or by theft. The Turf contains among its chief supporters some of the most honourable as well as the most distinguished men in the British Empire, not only men who are in the highest position socially by mere accident of birth, but also those who are distinguished Statesmen, brilliant Members of both Houses of Parliament, men of letters, eminent lawyers, soldiers in high command, highly respected bankers, and merchant princes. In fact all classes of society are bound together by one great bond of common interest, namely their admiration for that grandest of all animals, the English thoroughbred racehorse, as well as a desire to back their opinion of its merit, which they are fully entitled to do.

The Turf as an institution is one of the most desirable and in fact one of the most essential in the country. It affords an immense market to the farmers for corn, hay and straw, a market which is in nearly every case local, without the necessity of distant transport, while the capital invested in racing stables and in our great horse-breeding establishments, as well as the employment they furnish to men who in most instances would not be suitable for other employment, is enormous.

“Oh, yes,” we hear some people say, “but racing encourages betting and gambling,” and my reply to that is, “Well, what about it?” Will those good, well-intentioned but unintelligent people tell me of any business in the world which is not either directly or indirectly gambling? Before we go any further let me arrive at a proper definition of the expression “gambling.” I will now give mine and will defy any living man to controvert it. I say that to gamble is “to take a certain risk to obtain a possible profit.” What particular kind of risk it may or may not be is entirely beside the point—the Stock Exchange, the Liverpool Cotton Exchange, the Hop Exchange, Lloyds, and all the Life Insurance and Fire Insurance Companies are purely and simply bookmakers

and nothing else, and the public who do business with them are the backers and are engaged in betting transactions with them pure and simple. Many of my readers will, I know, kick and squeal at this, but nothing they can say will ever alter the fact that it is true and unanswerable.

I was much amused a short time ago when I was in Liverpool. A friend of mine who is nearly, if not quite, the oldest member of the Committee of the Cotton Exchange, invited me to lunch with him at the Club over the Exchange Buildings, and as we were passing through the Exchange, on our way to the lift that takes you up to the Club, we stood for a few minutes behind some marble pillars watching the scene of excitement in the centre of the building. After a while I turned to my friend and said "Tell me the difference between this and betting in the ring on a racecourse?" He looked at me out of the corner of his eye and said "None whatever." But then what else could he say?—he is an honest man. I have no doubt that I shall astonish some of my inexperienced readers when I tell them that it is a statistical fact that fewer people are ruined by racing and betting than by several other forms of gambling. Very few men in this country have had such a wide experience of life as



I have and I have no hesitation in saying that no business in existence is carried on in such an honourable manner as the Turf, and in no other will you find so many men whose mere word is their bond. Think for a moment. It is obvious; how could it be otherwise? What security is there on the Turf except a man's honour? It is his one and only right of existence in that particular community, for a debt in the ring is not recoverable by law. I knew a recent case of a man who wished to open the usual credit account with a big firm of bookmakers. In the letter in which he applied for an account he referred them to Messrs. Coutts, his bankers, also to his solicitors, who were some well-known firm or other, both of whom gave him a good reference. The firm however wrote to him and said: "We are quite satisfied that you *can* pay, but we must ask you to furnish us with a sporting reference as we want to satisfy ourselves that you *will* pay." Where can you show me any other business in the world where huge sums of money pass from hand to hand nearly the whole year round without any legal obligation being entered into on either side, secured by no contract except an honourable understanding indicated by a few short words, or a nod of the head? All things



considered I have no hesitation in saying that I consider the Turf the most honourable and the most respectable of all the great commercial businesses of this country.

No, let the Government direct their attention to the suppression of that greatest of all national curses, Drink. Let them attack it, not with a kid glove but with an iron hand; if they do, every man in this country who is worth calling a man will back them up heart and soul. Any man who is ordinarily observant and who can manage to get about not only in London but also in the north and in the midlands, and can then look me in the face and tell me that Drink is not the great outstanding national curse, is either an egregious idiot or an unmitigated liar. Drink is also unfortunately the frequent cause of other vices. It is, however, itself the most bestial of all vices, with the exception of course of some that I will not mention. I have seen in my career, and so has every other man of the world, man after man, woman after woman, who started life under the brightest of auspices, sink lower and lower till they have at last sunk into the gutter, the workhouse, or the grave, dragging with them their wretched wives, husbands, and children, and all in consequence of this liquid hell

and of nothing else. The late hangman stated in a public lecture that all the men he had hanged, with only two exceptions, had committed through drink and drink alone the murders for which they had suffered the extreme penalty of the law. The common lodging houses, workhouses, Rowton houses, prisons, and other similar institutions, contain from time to time men who were formerly clergymen, barristers, artists, officers in the Army and Navy, etc., and who owe their presence there to drink and drink alone. Oddly enough only this very day I met a man—if we can still call him a man—walking along a passage by St. Martin's Church, Trafalgar Square. He had a long tangled dirty beard, he wore no collar, his hair now worn long was hanging over his turned up coat collar, his boots were of the kind that one sees lying in the gutter, he was dirty and in rags. I know him well. All his friends and kinsfolk have tried over and over again to help him, but it is useless. If you give him money it passes straight into the till of the nearest public house; if you give him clothes he pawns them and the proceeds pass into the pocket of some publican. He was a rising and most promising young barrister, and when last we met we were both members of the same house party,

when we were shooting with a well-known and popular peer in the south of England. It is not merely the sale of drink that must be dealt with. What we require is the most drastic legislation that will enable us to deal with the habitual drunkard, male or female.

I once heard of a man who thought he was a teapot—it was no doubt a mistaken idea on his part, but he was perfectly harmless both to himself and others, although it was I daresay rather tiresome to be frequently invited to “pour him out.” I also knew a man who thought he was a railway engine; he would blow out his cheeks, make a loud puffing noise, walk round and round lifting his legs as high as he could as though they were wheels, at the same time asking me to walk behind him and pretend that I was the tender. Probably the former of these two men was shut up in a lunatic asylum, and I know for a fact that the other was, yet the habitual drunkard who is in reality quite as insane as the two gentlemen mentioned above, and is a curse to himself and to everybody connected with him, can continue to destroy himself and drag down his unfortunate wife and family to the lowest depths of misery and despair. Not only is such a condition of things grossly illogical and unjust, but



it is a great deal more—it is a public scandal and a national disgrace.

I am told that blackmailing has been for years largely on the increase in London, and I believe from what I hear that this is perfectly true. I have had in the course of my somewhat eventful career only two attempts of the kind made upon me. On the first occasion I threw the man who attempted to blackmail me over a staircase in a London hotel from the first floor to the ground floor, where he lay, much to my alarm, insensible for about ten minutes. On the second occasion I deliberately allowed myself to be blackmailed in certain special circumstances which I do not describe here, as it suited my purpose to do so, in order that I might protect a third party.

I am often asked what I think of the comparative methods of the Court and Society of to-day, and the Court and Society when I was a young man. Society I have already discussed in these pages. The Court has beyond doubt in many respects greatly changed since that time. In those days when the late Queen Victoria was on the throne the Court was for all practical purposes represented by the late King Edward and Queen Alexandra, at that time Prince and Princess of Wales. Before



he came to the throne King Edward had always charming manners and in many ways showed himself possessed of much diplomatic ability. On many occasions however and in many ways in his private life, he exhibited the most remarkable carelessness and lack of wisdom. In a large majority of these cases he was influenced, aided and abetted by one of his Equerries, who was the most undesirable man for the post who could possibly have been found, or imagined. I was present when His Royal Highness announced his intention of giving him this appointment, and remember foreseeing at the moment what the result would be, and I was right. Speaking of King Edward reminds me that I was then very keen on collecting old snuff boxes and old watches. One day I strolled into a certain dealer's shop in Bond Street, when he mentioned the fact that he had a watch that although not an antique might possibly be of interest to me. So he showed me the outside case of a gold repeater watch without the works upon which was an inscription which so far as I can remember ran as follows "To Albert Edward from his affectionate parents Albert and Victoria, Windsor," with a date underneath which I do not now remember. It appeared that this watch had either been lost by or

stolen from King Edward one night in London in circumstances which I do not now remember. I purchased the watch and presented it to King Edward, or rather to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as he then was.

Of Queen Alexandra it is not necessary to say anything—all the world knows the history of that great and noble woman. King George and Queen Mary, our present King and Queen, not only in their official capacity as King and Queen but also in their private lives as husband and wife and as father and mother, have set a noble example of priceless value to the whole nation; they have stamped the Court with a hall-mark which it would be well if some of their subjects would try to imitate in their own homes. I had the honour of dancing with Her Majesty at her first ball, she being then Princess May of Teck. It was at Lord Hopetoun's. I remember that on that occasion the men who had been employed to polish the floor of the ballroom had made a mistake and used the wrong stuff for the purpose, with the result that the lining of the long skirts of the ladies who were dancing all became more or less black. The ball opened with a Royal Quadrille, in which I danced with Lady Tweeddale, and the following dance, a

valse, I danced with our present Queen. Talking of Hopetoun reminds me of a very funny story. There is a church or chapel there, with a private pew belonging to Lord Hopetoun, which is situated high up in the building in rather the same way as a box in the theatre. Lord Hopetoun's family name is Hope, and one Sunday morning the family had mustered in the family pew, or box, whichever you like to call it, in unusually strong force. The Pastor, who was conducting the service on that morning was preaching on the unreliability of this world's happiness and the continual disappointments to which humanity is subject. Raising his eyes toward the ceiling, he said with an air of profound conviction: "Ah, my friends, this world is indeed full of disappointments, even this very building that we are now in is full of *blasted Hopes*." It takes a good deal to destroy the gravity of a Scotch service, but this remark fairly did the trick. Opening out of this private family pew at Hopetoun there was a small sitting room, and I have been told that a former Lady Hopetoun used to lunch there, and the footman would come in and say "The service has begun, my lady," and in she would go to her devotions.

To write one's reminiscences is not nearly so



easy as people think, especially if in writing them you wish to remember what the world is entitled to expect from a gentleman. I have read some reminiscences that I consider a disgrace to their authors. I have naturally been unable to include in these pages an immense amount of matter that is both interesting and amusing, as I have been most anxious not to cause pain to others. For my own part I read nothing whatever but theology, history, biography, reminiscences and poetry. I am asked at least half-a-dozen times a week how it is that I keep so young and fit. I will give my readers the prescription free of charge, namely :—

Do not drink.

Go to bed early.

Get up early.

Take plenty of exercise in the open air.

Be an optimist.

I have in my life done many foolish things, but I was never a big enough fool to drink. I have nearly always kept early hours and my worst enemy could not deny that I have always been a champion optimist. Unfortunately my wife is rather inclined to be the reverse and she has frequently reminded me of the definition that somebody—I forget who—once gave of a pessimist, namely, “a person who had once lived with an optimist.” All the great



things of this world however have been achieved by optimists; if our soldiers at the Front, our sailors on the sea, our airmen in the clouds, and those who helped at home in the late War, had not been optimists, the Kaiser would now be at Buckingham Palace. The result, however, of all this is that to-day at the age of sixty I am as strong, as fit, and as quick as I was at twenty-five, and I have been frequently taken for my eldest son's elder brother, and I think nothing of walking now and then thirty miles a day. So my recipe for keeping young has proved its own value. As for my tastes they are varied, and I regret to say, extremely expensive. I am passionately fond of music, motoring, racing, hunting, and shooting. I am also very fond of art, especially pictures, and I have a passion for children and animals, especially horses and dogs, both of which have been the cause on various occasions in my life of my embarking upon fights in the streets and elsewhere. Almighty God has by His Divine power created for our enjoyment a world so beautiful that it ought to satisfy the most dissatisfied and rebellious of the human race, but man has done his best to spoil it. A long and varied experience however of life, together with a very intimate acquaintance with the private lives of a vast number of people, both men and women, many of them the most prominent and influential people of their day,

has taught me that quite a considerable proportion of the most respected men with the highest reputations for honour and respectability are frequently the greatest blackguards and the most contemptible of men, whereas many men who have what is called a "bad name" in the world are trustworthy and of estimable character. I have seen such a vast number of instances of this that at last I have reached the point where the fact that this man or that man, or this woman or that woman, is well spoken of by Society at large, does not convey anything to me whatever, as I know that he or she is just as likely as not to be entirely undeserving of a good reputation. Some writer (I forget his name) said: "The more I see of men the more I love dogs." He was right. The great trouble is that impartiality and independence of mind are among the rarest qualities to be found in the human race. Any man who has the slightest fear of public opinion and who is ready to let it lead him by the nose is a useless unit of the community. If he is in any way taking part in the public life of the nation, as for instance a politician, a preacher, a lecturer, public speaker, or writer, then such a fear renders him worse than useless, a grave public danger. The first great necessity of life, humanly speaking, is justice. It is the foundation of all things, and how can justice exist unless the minds of men are fearless and impartial

and free from prejudice? Such for instance as that of the present Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Reading. The opinions of men are usually the opinions that happen to be popular at the moment, or else they are based on the opinions of the person who was last in their society. The world is ruled by prejudice, either in favour of some utterly unworthy object, or to the detriment of some other that is not unworthy. Personally I care less than nothing for the opinion of the world at large; I care only for the love of my dear ones and the good opinion of my really intimate friends. In fact I can say honestly and truthfully that I do not know what the feeling is like, namely, fear of the world's opinion, that so many people seem to have. I have never had it for the simple reason that I know the world thoroughly, inside and out, and from top to bottom.

And now a very tired hand may cease to write and I will close this my last chapter with a verse taken from a book of poems of my own which is about to be published.

Oh Prejudice, thou child thou spawn of Hell  
 Who holdest man beneath thine iron hand  
 Against thee all the hosts of truth rebel  
 By Satan's power thou dost ever stand.

Thou rulest in the hearts and minds of men  
 In halls of so-called justice thou art ever near,  
 And so shall be till light and truth do reign  
 And He who knoweth all things doth appear.



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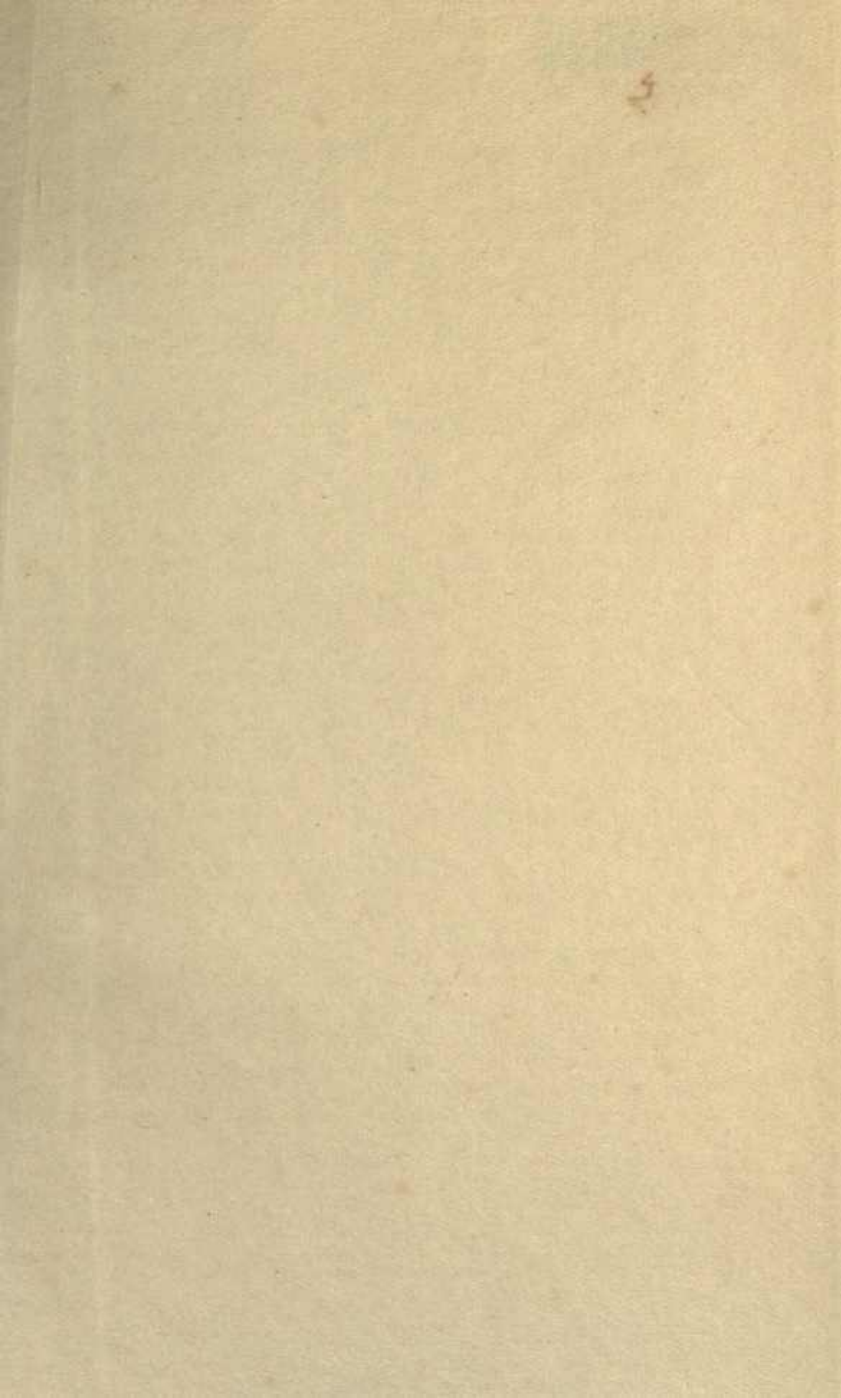
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